

DAVID MOBERG CRASHES THOMAS FRIEDMAN'S LEXUS

In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

May 16, 1999

THE KOSOVO QUAGMIRE

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IN THESE TIMES

1999

Historic APPEAL TO REASON Campaign

Dear *In These Times* Reader:

You're surrounded by media with backward priorities, newsmakers more concerned about the bottom line than the front page. You've seen the results: tabloid publications masquerading as real news. The creeping media monopoly seems inevitable—but it's not. At *In These Times*, we would like to challenge this state of affairs.

We're calling our effort the Appeal to Reason Campaign, following in the footsteps of that legendary weekly newspaper published at the turn of the century in Girard, Kansas. The *Appeal to Reason* reached 750,000 subscribers in its heyday with the help of committed readers, an "Appeal Army" that spread word about the newspaper. Our immediate goal is, in comparison, a modest one: With your support, we aim to double our readership over the next three years.

There are many reasons why *In These Times* shouldn't exist. In the past few decades, many magazines on the left have perished. Given the corporate domination of media markets, the fierce competition among commercial publications and a narrowing spectrum of serious debate about public policy, it's clear that simply by surviving for 23 years, we have beaten the odds.

We have been able to continue publishing only because of our committed subscribers and donors. This support from our readers has allowed us to build an award-winning magazine with a proud history of journalistic achievement.

Dedicated supporters often mention *In These Times* to their friends and learn that many potential readers have never heard of us. We want to reach a much wider circle of subscribers,

especially younger readers. We also want *In These Times* to be found in many more schools and libraries around the country.

We believe that a unique political situation now exists. Most Americans are disillusioned, even disgusted, with the leadership of both political parties. A growing number of people are open to alternative views and visions—and many are looking for information and ideas that they can't get on the newsstands or television.

In about a month, our donors will be receiving a detailed report outlining our plans for this ambitious campaign. If you are a donor, we ask that you consider our proposal, help us to refine our strategy and sign on. If you are a subscriber who would like to help, please contact us (toll-free) at 1-888-READ-ITT or e-mail us at itt@inthesetimes.com for a copy of the report and to learn how you can become involved.

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Letters

Who's Right? What's Left?

While I applaud your efforts to bring a rather dormant issue on campus back into the limelight, I was disappointed with the article on the University of Wisconsin's current court case pertaining to mandatory fees. ("Campus Crusade," March 21). As a UW-Madison student, I know this is considerably more than just a liberal versus conservative issue and its complexity demands more than the eight inches of text it received.

This issue, I feel, raises some of the most profound rhetorical questions I have encountered in my educational career: What is the definition of political or ideological? Who is going to formulate this definition? And finally, who will enforce this definition? These questions may have been spearheaded by conservatives, but even so-called open-minded liberals would attest to them as well.

Jennifer Pfafflin
Arts Editor
The Daily Cardinal
Madison, Wis.

Not So Easy

Although it is apparent where Annette Fuentes is coming from in her defense of mifepristone (RU 486) and its use as an abortifacient, I suggest that she may have fallen into the trap of the anti-choice forces that would like nothing more than for the pro-choice people to have to defend abortion as an entity

("A Hard Pill to Swallow," March 21). Yes, there is a place for RU 486, and, yes, it should not be dismissed out of hand. But to laud it as some sort of needed alternative is misguided and a bit chimerical.

I am able, with a well-trained team, to complete as many as six first trimester abortions in an hour, as can many of my colleagues. Many young women come in during their lunch break and are able to return to their normal afternoon work and social activities. And the costs have been filtered down to a realistic level.

Compare this to what takes place with RU 486, as Fuentes accurately described. It takes two medications, often several doctor visits, and the patient having to deal with her own expulsion without doctor standby assistance. And this is at a cost that usually exceeds a fast, safe and well-performed abortion.

Why then do we search out for an alternative that is being gasconaded not as a stopgap or fallback but as a replacement with an attitude that the anti-choice forces have to be placated and stroked?

To suggest that giving women a medical agent so that they can go home, or somewhere, and abort themselves without doctor or responsible significant other is an abnegation of reality. In her plea for better provisions for women, I ask Fuentes not to resort to being a gadfly and to put her energies in the right place. If it is not broken, don't fix it.

Dr. Don Sloan
New York

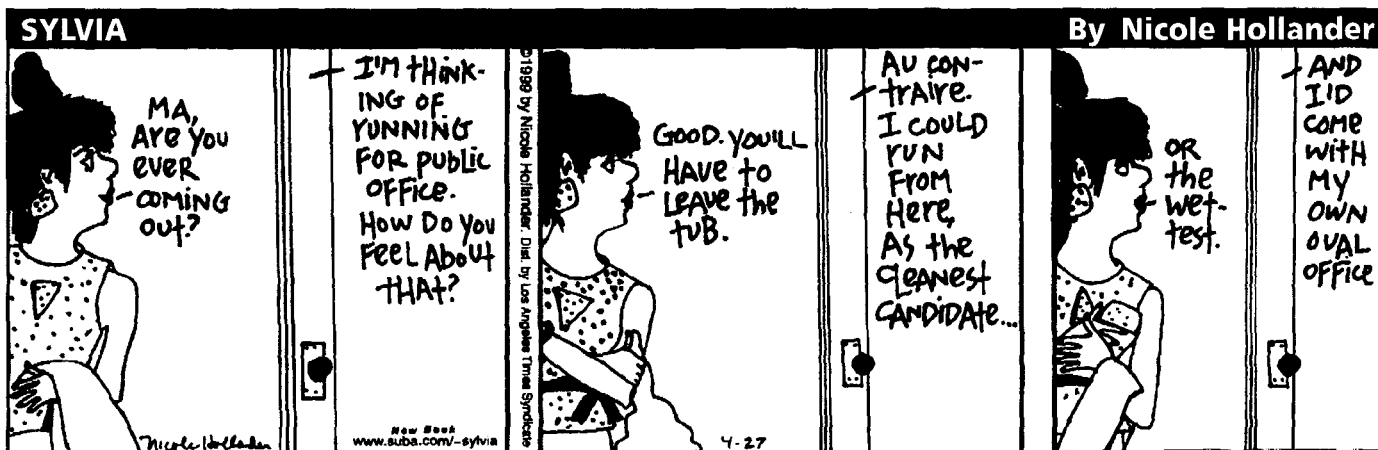
Annette Fuentes responds: It's not at all apparent where Dr. Sloan is coming from. In one breath he says "there is a place for RU 486," and then he says it's misguided to say it's a needed alternative. Which is it?

Mifepristone cannot be a replacement for surgical abortion, so Sloan's services will always be needed as long as women have unintended or undesired pregnancies. But for those who need to terminate an early pregnancy, voluminous clinical evidence has proven that mifepristone is a safe and good choice for women. To suggest that a woman who chooses a medical abortion would be left on her own to abort at home is a distortion of the procedure, which is strictly guided by a doctor and other medical professionals.

But the real argument for mifepristone as one more choice comes from women themselves. In April 1998, The New England Journal of Medicine reported the findings of U.S. clinical trials on mifepristone and women's rating of the procedure. It said in summary: "96 percent of the women in the study said they would recommend it to others. ... More than three-quarters of the women who had a previous surgical abortion—about half of the total sample of women—said medical abortion was more satisfactory."

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A New Beginning

Almost 23 years ago, I moved from San Francisco to Chicago to start a weekly newspaper named *The New Majority*. By a vote of 12 to 1 that idea was shot down at our first staff meeting, and after considerable name-searching, *In These Times* was chosen instead. My preference for *The New Majority* was historical—a fine weekly of that name, published in the '20s by the Chicago Farmer-Labor Party. But the name was more than a bow to principled predecessors; it was also a reflection of the optimism of the years immediately following Richard Nixon's humiliation and resignation.

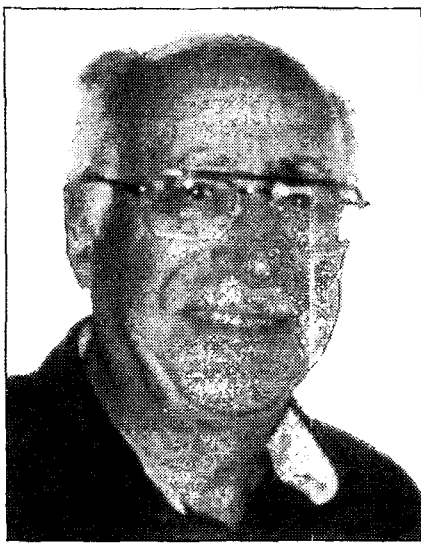
Optimism, however, is a tricky thing, as anyone living in Chicago for a while finds out. Every year in early March we have a few really warm, sunny days. Spring is here, newcomers like to think. But weeks, and sometimes a month or two, of winter follow. And, as with dreams about the weather, my dreams about a revival of the left soon came up hard against the chill of Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and George Bush.

In the prospectus that I had written while still in San Francisco, I predicted that, ultimately, the magazine's fate would be determined by what happened to the American left. If a sane new movement emerged and grew out of the wreckage of the '60s, I believed, *In These Times* would soon reach hundreds of thousands of readers. But, on the other hand, if the left floundered, we would have a hard row to hoe.

And so, for 23 years we have struggled against the odds—and beaten them. Here we are, one of the few of the dozens of newspapers and magazines on the left that existed or started in the early '70s that is still publishing. And not just publishing—but improving steadily and rebounding in readership.

For me, however, 23 years is enough. It has been an interesting time—sometimes harrowing, sometimes fun and too often excruciatingly painful. I've wanted to do something else for the past four or five years, but I was determined not to leave until I felt confident that the magazine was in good hands. Fortunately now it is, with a new publisher, Beth Schulman, and a new editor, Joel Bleifuss, along with a fine team of senior and assistant editors.

Beth and Joel are not new faces. Beth was our associate publisher for seven years and Joel has been an editor and columnist for 12 years. They both understand the principles on which *In These Times* is based and share a deep commitment to its mission.



The editorial staff is also exceptionally strong. Senior editor David Moberg has been with us since day one. No journalist knows more about the labor movement or is more respected by American unionists than David. Salim Muwakkil, who has been editing and writing for us for 14 years, is widely recognized as one of the best analysts on the left of African-American politics and culture. Pat Aufderheide, who has been our culture editor, film reviewer and media critic during the past 20 years, provides analysis and criticism that is unsurpassed.

Then, too, we have an amazingly smart and talented group of new young editors, new managing editor Craig Aaron, news editor Kristin Kolb and culture editor Joe Knowles. This new generation of editors, along with Joel, have not only been responsible for the improvements of the past year, but also bode well for the future of progressive journalism.

I believe that the left is showing signs of emerging from its decades-long paralysis. So I take my leave with confidence that *In These Times* is in good hands.

I take my leave with confidence that *In These Times* is in good hands. Furthermore, I believe that the left is showing signs of emerging from its decades-long paralysis, brought on both by a surrender to neoliberalism and its retreat into the moralism and political correctness of identity politics. That belief, however, is not a source of confidence, but simply of a hope that can be realized only through painstaking reconsideration of our collective past.

In the years ahead, I plan to devote myself to thinking and writing about the American left and its prospects. It is something that cannot be done in the hurly-burly of producing a biweekly magazine and scurrying for the resources to keep it afloat, but it is a need I've felt for several years. So, like every ending, for me this is a new beginning.

James Weinstein

Landing a Win Over Mines

By Jim Wurst
UNITED NATIONS

When delegations from 60 countries meet in Maputo, Mozambique, in early May to review the Ottawa Treaty banning landmines, they will face the daunting task of how to repair the damage inflicted by the rampant, indiscriminate use of this particularly vicious weapon.

Maputo is the latest step in a long campaign to ban one of the most commonly used weapons in the world. As recently as five years ago, 110 million landmines infested 70 nations, maiming and killing more than 2,000 people a month. And the problem was growing: For every mine cleared, 20 more were laid.

The Ottawa Treaty was signed in December 1997 by 122 countries. When the fortieth nation ratified it late last year, it became international law faster than any major arms control treaty in U.N. history. Since then, production and export of mines has dropped significantly. Even the major mine producers opposed to Ottawa—the United States, Russia, China and Pakistan—no longer export mines.

The success came about through a campaign of unprecedented cooperation

among mid-size states such as Canada, South Africa, Austria and Norway and a massive popular movement, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). Even politically neutral organizations, like the United Nations and the Red Cross, came out early in strong favor of a ban, saying the indiscriminate use of mines is a humanitarian disaster. The ICBL and one of its co-founders, Jody Williams, were awarded the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize.

But the viability of the agreement falls to more than the nations that signed it. For the first time, the United Nations has a direct role in monitoring an arms control treaty (historically such responsibilities are taken by specialized agencies). It is the secretary-general's responsibility to assemble teams of experts to investigate possible violations of the treaty and propose corrective action. Since Ottawa has been in force for only a few months, no investigations have yet occurred. But some could come out of the Maputo Conference.

The grass-roots campaigners who helped make the treaty a reality are also working to keep it a top international priority. ICBL's *Landmine*

Monitor will publish its first annual report at the Maputo conference. Based on the work of 80 researchers in 120 countries, the report will survey how well governments are doing in halting production, destroying their arsenals and aiding in victim assistance and mine clearance. To date, at least 12 million mines have been destroyed, mostly by Canada, Norway, Italy and South Africa. One of the latest signatories is Ukraine, which has a stockpile of 10 million mines.

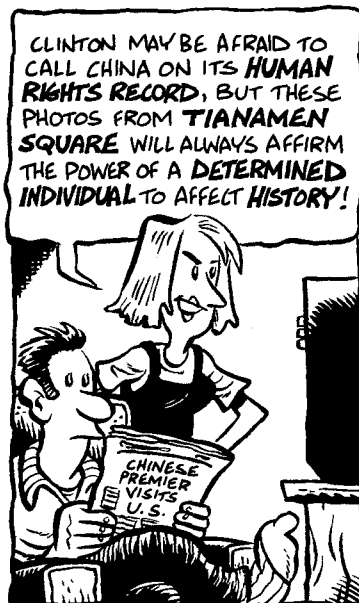
The ban is not, however, a done deal. "On the downside, mines are not coming out of the ground as fast as we would like," says Tun Channereth, a Cambodian landmine survivor and ICBL spokesman. "Too much of the increased money pledged to mine clearance is not reaching the field." According to the ICBL and the United Nations, mines are still being laid in Sri Lanka, Burma, Georgia, Yugoslavia, Colombia, Algeria, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the entire Horn of Africa.

Meanwhile, the United States remains the only Western power to reject the treaty. Under heavy pressure from the Pentagon, the Clinton administration withdrew from treaty negotiations in 1997 after its proposed loopholes (including an exemption for mines in South Korea) were rejected. Now Washington says it will sign the treaty in 2006 as long as more sophisticated weapons can replace mines, something Mary Wareham of Human Rights Watch called "meaningless" since the government is putting so little effort into the research. The United States may not even go to Maputo as an observer because of congressional opposition to paying a share of the conference's costs.

Still, banning landmines may end up being the easiest part of the campaign; clearing mines and assisting survivors will take decades. Wareham says the Maputo agenda will be topped by "increasing resources for mine clearance and assistance to mine victims."

"We may have turned the corner," Channereth says. "But the daily toll of mine victims remains frightfully high." ■

Jim Wurst wrote "Small Arms of Mass Destruction" in the Dec. 16, 1998 issue.



Faces of Evil

Around of applause, please, for the Serbian people. No matter how often they're pounded with bombs or told their leader is Hitler incarnate, none of them seems to be launching impeachment proceedings.

Instead, they gather in Belgrade for patriotic rock concerts featuring some of the very same performers who, only a couple of years ago, were busily rocking against Slobodan Milosevic. In an instructive contrast to NATO, which fights only when the weather is agreeable, the Serbian civilians don bullseyes and form human chains over vulnerable bridges.

Confronted with this extraordinary surge of Serbian solidarity, NATO spokesman Jamie Shea opined that they'll get over it soon enough. A follow-up question, if you don't mind, Mr. Shea: If the Serbs are still smarting from their defeat at the Battle of Kosovo more than 600 years ago, what makes you think they're going to forget the bombings of Belgrade, Novi Sad and Aleksinac in a couple of weeks?

The historical analogies are far from encouraging. When the Luftwaffe bombed London, you may recall that the English failed to rise up against Winston Churchill. Similarly, the obsessive bombing of Iraq by the United States has yet to produce a mighty pro-democracy, anti-Saddam movement on the ground. In fact, persecution—real or perceived—is the very seedbed of nationalist enthusiasm. Observe how the Australians still get misty-eyed over the Battle of Gallipoli, at which they were soundly whipped.

You don't have to read Serbo-Croatian to understand what the Serbian rockers and demonstrators are trying to tell us—namely, that there's more than one person in Serbia. This should come as no surprise, since the almanac lists 11 million residents in addition to the president and his immediate cronies. But the NATO assault so far has been conducted against a single individual, just as the United States likes to imagine that Iraq contains only one occupant, Saddam Hussein.

This is the one-man theory of the nation-state, and its effect is to transform war into an S/M psychodrama: Now that we've degraded "his" infrastructure and knocked out "his" supply lines, will he finally break? When will



he cry uncle? No one in NATO seems to have realized that when Milosevic looks out his window, he doesn't just see mangled bridges and smashed ministries, he sees the same militant crowds that we do. Imagine the warm feeling it must give him to know that this time the people aren't calling for his ouster, they're hailing him as their beloved leader.

The one-man theory of the nation-state undoubtedly has its charms. For one thing, it eliminates the psycholog-

The alternative, multi-person theory of the state is not only conceptually more challenging, but it requires an entirely different approach to conflict. You would start, not with bombs, but with an information blitz aimed at an entire population. If, for example, it's true that the Serbian people think the Kosovar Albanians are fleeing NATO bombs, not Serbian forces—why not deluge them with faxes and e-mail? Maybe an information war wouldn't work, but with a literate, PC-possessing population, there's no excuse for not giving it a try. Next, you'd bend over backward not to injure a single Serbian civilian, even if this means passing on a tempting downtown target or two.

If peace is the aim, then the peace-keeper's rule should be the same as the medical profession's: First, do no harm. If all this sounds disgustingly soft-minded, bear in mind that the current NATO strategy seems designed to turn the children in Belgrade's bomb shelters into tomorrow's international terrorist menace.

**Which would you rather watch on TV:
NATO vs. the Federal Republic of
Yugoslavia, or Bombin' Bill going
mano a mano against Sadistic Sloba?**

ical imponderable that is nationalism, which can be ignored while we concentrate on the individual psychopathology of a Slobodan or a Saddam. Furthermore, it eases any guilt occasioned by civilian casualties, since those civilians never fully existed in the first place. Finally, it restores the lost glories of the days of individual combat, when brave men rode out on horseback to joust with the other side's warrior heroes, while the foot soldiers fell back in awe. Which would you rather watch on TV: NATO vs. the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, or Bombin' Bill going *mano a mano* against Sadistic Sloba?

In the end, of course, we bomb because bombing is what we know how to do. Here, another historical analogy may apply: In the Hundred Years War, the French knights tried to battle English archers by charging them on horseback in the usual knightly fashion. Again and again—Crécy through Agincourt—the French knights charged very nicely indeed, and were duly slaughtered by English arrows. Yes, NATO does a commendable job of bombing. But it has yet to prove it can accomplish anything useful. ■

Barbara Ehrenreich is the author, most recently, of *Blood Rites*.

THE KOSOVO QUAGMIRE

A mythical field of blackbirds in a distant land is suddenly swarming with NATO aircraft and commanding the world's attention.

The new war in the Balkans is as strange as it sounds. As the West's great alliance pelts the Yugoslav landscape, the public is spoon fed images of dazed children begging for bread and teen-agers clutching targets amassing in a grandiose European park. For many, the onslaught of information about the crisis in Yugoslavia has only made the conundrum more baffling. What is happening and how do we make sense out of it?

These questions rarely are answered well. War brings out

irrationality and extremism in the search for easy answers to nullify the overwhelming confusion and fear. The current crisis is particularly vexing for the left. On the one hand, NATO is attacking and intervening with a sovereign state. On the other, ignoring the plight of the Kosovar Albanians could put us on the wrong side of history.

In this issue, we have asked three of our regular contributors, Diana Johnstone, Paul Hockenos and George Kenney—each an expert on the Balkans—for their opinions on the conflict. As the war worsens, it is imperative that the left sort through the muddled news and eloquently voice its discontent.

Kristin Kolb



NATO/REUTERS

NATO bombs decimate a Serbian airfield.

THE WAR NATO WANTED

BY DIANA JOHNSTONE

PARIS

To justify their assault on Serbia, the United States and its obedient NATO allies claimed they had no choice. As the official story goes, Slobodan Milosevic (suddenly the reincarnation of Hitler who has the power to make all other citizens of Yugoslavia invisible to the Clinton administration) refused to negotiate and rejected the Rambouillet peace agreement. Therefore, there was nothing else to do but bomb Yugoslavia.

This preposterous lie is only one among countless others.

In reality, Belgrade never refused to negotiate. Rambouillet was never about negotiations. It was about presenting the Serbs with an ultimatum precisely designed to provide the pretext for NATO bombing. Rambouillet was a tragic farce, a low point in the history of diplomacy, in which the United States had to coax and cajole a band of well-armed criminals into signing the death warrant of their adversary, the legitimate government of Yugoslavia.

The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) is scarcely the sort of outfit one might expect to see invited to a famous French chateau to decide on the future of war and peace in Europe. The connection between KLA gunmen and the ethnic Albanians who dominate the heroin traffic through the Balkans from Turkey to Switzerland and Germany has been widely reported. As for ideology, violent ethnic Albanian irredentism has switched opportunistically from fascism during World War II, to "Marxism-Leninism" in the days of Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha, to today's enthusiasm for NATO. The constant factor is hatred of Serbs in particular and Slavs in general.

The rise of the KLA was a challenge to the leadership of the ethnic Albanian nationalists' nonviolent leadership, headed by Ibrahim Rugova. The killing of Serbs in Kosovo began in April 1996, thanks to the arms glut caused by the total collapse of law and order in Albania. Not only Yugoslav police but also ethnic Albanians branded as "traitors" were targeted. Last summer, by posing for news photographers with a KLA officer, Richard Holbrooke publicly signaled that the United States was dropping Rugova in favor of the KLA. The process was completed at Rambouillet with the Feb. 6 arrival of the official ethnic Albanian delegation of 16 members, five of them from the KLA. Rugova and the older generation of leaders were suddenly shoved onto the sidelines, as an unknown, 29-year-old KLA chieftain named Hashim "The Snake" Thaqi was introduced to the world as the leader of the delegation.

The KLA's irresistible rise was nurtured notably by Morton Abramowitz, a prominent member of the U.S. foreign policy elite. Abramowitz served as ambassador to Thailand when the CIA's Bangkok bureau was perpetrating the "yellow rain" hoax that accused Vietnamese victims of U.S. chemical warfare of using chemical agents in Laos. In 1986, as assistant secretary of state in charge of intelligence and research in the Reagan administration, Abramowitz and top CIA officials accompanied Sen. Orrin Hatch to Beijing to work out a deal

with China and Pakistan for providing Stinger missiles to Islamic Afghan rebels.

He then passed, quite naturally, to the presidency of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Under the Clinton administration, he has participated in a blue-ribbon panel on CIA reform—selected by the Council on Foreign Relations—which recommended easing restrictions on covert actions. More recently, Abramowitz has been a leading figure in the high-level International Crisis Group, a leading designer of policy toward Kosovo. There, he became



PETER KLUNDZIC/REUTERS

Anti-NATO demonstrators march in Belgrade.

an advocate of arming the KLA. At Rambouillet, Abramowitz and another U.S. official, Paul Williams, led a team coaching the KLA delegation.

Even so, at Rambouillet, "The Snake" bit the hand that fed him and refused to sign the document. To the fury and dismay of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, it was not the Serbs but the Albanian KLA that balked, depriving the United States of its pretext to launch a NATO war against the Serbs. Rambouillet was adjourned. Former Sen. Bob Dole, recipient of generous campaign contributions from the Albanian-American lobby during his political career, was dispatched to the Balkans to urge the Albanians to sign the treaty—not to make peace, but to "maintain pressure" on the Serbs. KLA leaders were bribed with a promise of a "visit to Washington to discuss matters of interest," notably the future of the KLA—veiled language meaning that the United States would not insist on disarming the KLA, but would find some formula for transforming what U.S. envoy Robert Gelbard had described as a "terrorist" group into "liberated" Kosovo's police force.

So it was that the Serbs and the Kosovar Albanians were summoned back to Paris to sign, as is, an agreement that in effect would detach Kosovo from Serbia and put it under the

joint control of NATO and whichever ethnic Albanians NATO chose—apparently, the KLA. There were no negotiations. Instead, Serbia's Milan Milutinovic and his (multi-ethnic) delegation were presented with an ultimatum: Either accept the "peace agreement" concocted by Christopher Hill (Holbrooke's second at Dayton who is now posted as U.S. ambassador to Macedonia) allowing NATO to take over Kosovo, or else be bombed. This ultimatum in itself was a violation of international law, which invalidates agreements obtained by the threat or use of force, according to the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

And the terms were totally unacceptable. Kosovo's "self-government" was to be run by a NATO official, with the title of Chief of the Implementation Mission, or CIM. The CIM would have the final say over virtually everything and everybody. Kosovo would be occupied by a NATO force called KFOR. No ceiling was placed on the size of KFOR forces, which would have full control of airspace over Kosovo, be immune to prosecution or liability under local law, and have free access to the rest of Yugoslavia—a license to invade the rest of the country on one pretext or another. The agreement called for withdrawal of Serbian police and armed forces, but the fate of "other forces" (no mention of the KLA, which thus escaped any commitment or obligations) would be decided later by the KFOR commander.

Not only Milosevic, but any Serbian opposition party, was bound to reject such terms. And yet compromise was not impossible. The Yugoslavs were ready to make huge concessions, but not to welcome NATO. NATO was the sticking point. A U.N. peacekeeping force might well have been acceptable. However, the Clinton administration insisted on NATO or nothing.

The rise of the KLA, backed by the United States and Germany (German intelligence reportedly played an important role in equipping the rebels), made it extremely dangerous for any more moderate ethnic Albanian leaders to negotiate with the Serbs. The KLA repeatedly announced what would

happen to such "traitors." By backing the KLA, the United States weakened the more moderate forces on both sides.

On December 21, 1998, the State Department released information from the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission that "the KLA harass or kidnap anyone who comes to the police," and that "representatives threatened to kill villagers and burn their homes if they did not join the KLA." It added that KLA harassment has reached such intensity that residents of six villages in the Stimlje region are "ready to flee."

Kosovo's ethnic Albanian civilians have been trapped between devastating NATO bombing raids, KLA thugs and Serbian police. That refugees would flee from Kosovo in all directions (including northward into central Serbia, a fact ignored by Western media) is scarcely surprising. Yet NATO exploited the resulting misery and confusion on the borders to justify the very bombing that triggered the exodus. The suffering of the refugees is genuine and poignant. The interpretations by Western officials and media are not to be trusted. (After Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, the United States "ethnically cleansed" the West Coast of Japanese Americans, although Japan did not announce that it was bombing the U.S. on behalf of armed Japanese-American secessionists.)

Various compromise proposals have been made from the Serb side over the years. They have been totally ignored by Western governments and media, which have claimed to be in favor of "restoring Kosovo's autonomy" and opposed to secession. This double language has been interpreted by both sides as veiled support for the Albanian irredentism. Confident of Western backing, Albanian nationalist leaders have held out for independence rather than any form of living together with the Serbs in Serbia. Partition has been dogmatically ruled out by the United States on the "domino-theory" grounds that it would destabilize Macedonia. NATO bombing has done that already. U.S. and NATO meddling so far have produced all of the disasters they promised to prevent, and a few more. NATO is not waging peace. It is waging war and must be stopped. ■

OPPORTUNITY LOST

BY DAVID M. FINE

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, there was ample opportunity for a nonviolent resolution in Kosovo. The international community could have encouraged the Kosovar's nonviolent resistance, which went on for nearly a decade, by giving it international recognition and significant coverage in the media, as well as by aiding Serbia's small pro-democracy opposition. It did none of this—instead choosing to deal solely with Slobodan Milosevic and tacitly supporting the Kosovo Liberation Army.

Milosevic began stripping Kosovo of its autonomy in 1989—scuttling Albanian-run schools and kicking hundreds out of state jobs. The Kosovars responded with peaceful strikes and demonstrations, which the Serbian police put down violently. Then, under the leadership of Ibrahim Rugova, the Kosovars created a parallel government and educational system. Teachers held secret classes under threat of police harassment. After 10 people were killed in protests in 1992, Rugova dissuaded Albanians from further demonstrations for fear of provoking violence, which he thought would ruin their chances for international recognition. He assured them that the Dayton Peace Accords would acknowledge their plight, but they were ignored.

After years of frustration, culminating in Milosevic failing to honor an agreement with Rugova to reopen the schools, the Kosovar Albanian students organized a massive demonstration for Oct. 1, 1997.

Western diplomats and Kosovar political elites were united in their intent to stop the student protest. But it went forward as planned, with 20,000 students taking part and 80,000 people lining their path. Police attacked the demonstrators with tear gas and water cannons; the students held tough, later organizing two follow-up protests. For the first time, the U.S. State Department and the European Union acknowledged Kosovo's plight.

The students' mobilization, however, coincided with an increase in the activities of the KLA. After years of political oppression and economic depression, the KLA became a convenient savior for many Kosovars. Meanwhile, in neighboring Albania, the military dissolved in the wake of financial collapse, freeing up guns and ammunition. The infusion of arms enabled the KLA to step up its guerrilla war against Serbian police and civilians, escalating the conflict.

It is unfortunate that peaceful protests do not garner the media attention that war does. As Anna Husarska, special correspondent for *The New Republic*, said on a recent panel at Harvard, "[Kosovars] know that guns and blood bring the front page of the *New York Times*." ■

David M. Fine is manager of *The Electronic Policy Network*, a project of *The American Prospect*.

MILOSEVIC WINS AGAIN?

BY PAUL HOCKENOS

BERLIN

It is the decade of Slobodan Milosevic. In the course of three Balkan wars, the Serbian leader has redrawn the region's demographic map and destabilized southeastern Europe for decades to come. More than 3 million people have been forced from their homes and a quarter of a million lives have been lost. Along the way, Milosevic has fractured the postwar Western alliance, undermined relations between Russia and the West, blackened the name of U.N. peace-keeping operations and humiliated NATO.

Even if Serbia lies in ruin at his feet, Milosevic stands as testimony that a fascistic policy of carving ethnic nation-states from multiethnic countries is a viable project in contemporary Europe. Current international efforts to forge a new "peace deal" with the Serbian leader could be playing right into his hands, creating the very conditions for his long-term political survival. Meanwhile, NATO bombing has squashed dissent and eviscerated democratic opposition across Yugoslavia. An isolated, embittered, economically devastated country is the perfect setting for an autocrat like Milosevic. NATO's bombing of factories, bridges and other civilian targets will ensure that Serbia remains fertile ground for national extremism for years to come.

Both on the battlefield in Kosovo and in Western capitals, the contours of a "negotiated settlement" acceptable to both Milosevic and Western leaders already are taking shape. Kosovo will become a NATO or U.N. protectorate, nominally still part of Yugoslavia but under international administration. An ethnic boundary line like the one through Bosnia will divide the province into sectors: one for Serbs, one for Kosovar Albanians. (One map circulating in the Swiss press shows three Serbian pockets in Kosovo—north, east and west of Pristina—all contingent to Serbia proper.) Not coincidentally, those territories freshly ethnically cleaned and under Serbian military control today—the location of the factories, mines and Orthodox monasteries—would end up in Serb hands. Two million ethnic Albanians would be squeezed into the rest. In Kosovo, Serbian forces appear at this moment to be "relocating" Kosovar Albanians into those areas Belgrade has earmarked for them.

As Blair and Clinton promise, after the war is over everyone will have the theoretical right to return to their homes. But, as in Bosnia, few—or none—will cross the ethnic divide to do so. For one, the Kosovar Albanians have no homes left in the new Albanian-free zones. Even if they were promised reconstruction funding, few would choose to live as a minority in a Serb-dominated area. Serb refugees

from Bosnia, Croatia and southern Kosovo would settle in the ransacked Kosovar villages.

Milosevic, in effect, will have created an ethnically compact Greater Serbia. But his real victory will not be in realizing some historical nationalist dream, for which he cares little. More importantly, he will have rid Yugoslavia of the Kosovo Liberation Army and nearly a million potential Albanian voters. The Kosovar vote, if it ever found common ground with anti-Milosevic forces in Montenegro, Vojvodina and Serbia proper, could spell the end for Milosevic and his radical nationalist allies. In fact, had Kosovar Albanians participated in national and republic elections over the past few years—as they theoretically had



The damage from NATO bombs in Pristina.

the right to do—the opposition almost certainly would have won several close elections. (The Kosovar leadership says there was no one to vote for, as the Serb opposition often resorts to nationalism as ugly as that of the regime parties.)

Some Western diplomats are touting such a grand Balkan carve-up as the endgame of choice to stabilize the region. Lord David Owen, the former EU negotiator in Bosnia, advocates chopping Kosovo in half and adding it—as well as the eastern part of the Bosnian Republic Srpska—to Yugoslavia. Western Herzegovina would go to Croatia, while western Srpska would stay in Bosnia. Such a deal at least would solve Belgrade's problem of re-populating Serb-controlled Kosovo: The certain refugee exodus of Serbs from western Srpska would fill the demographic gaps.

To his credit, Owen understands what Western leaders

GORAN TOMASEVIC/REUTERS

and NATO still don't: Milosevic never wanted—nor ever intended—to accept the conditions of the Rambouillet treaty. Critics who claim that Western diplomats deliberately missed genuine chances to broker a compromise with the Serbian leadership delude themselves. A politically autonomous province with Kosovar self-rule would have stripped Belgrade of its last, increasingly tenuous means to control the territory. The drawn-out Western strategy of threatening air strikes and then bombing Milosevic into compliance never had a chance; it simply gave him time to prepare a surgical ethnic cleansing that was faster, more thorough and more systematic than anything in Bosnia. Even at the height of Third Reich deportations, Nazi Germany never managed to deport 600,000 people in two weeks, not to mention the complete annihilation of dozens of villages and cities in the same stroke.

The Serbian blitz obviously was planned well in advance, probably even before the Rambouillet talks began. Over the past year, as I followed the Belgrade nightly news broadcasts transmitted into Bosnia, it was clear what was in the works. The state media constantly plied the population with the crassest images of Kosovar Albanians as primitive, subhuman creatures—priming Serbs to accept, and even support, the atrocities. And it is no secret that ethnic cleansing had been in progress for the past eight months. In fact, Milosevic's preparation for a final solution to the Kosovo problem had been underway since he stripped the province

of its autonomy in 1989. The appearance of the KLA was a self-fulfilling prophecy, a logical and calculated consequence of ratcheting up the repression in Kosovo. The only mystery, a credit to the moderate Kosovar Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova, was that it took so long for an armed nationalist movement to raise its head.

Western leaders must come to grips with a complex reality: There can be no peace in the Balkans with Milosevic, and no long-term stability without a democratic Serbia. Milosevic should be publicly indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity at the Hague. His removal must be a precondition for a cease-fire, political negotiations and eventually the economic reconstruction and democratization of Yugoslavia. If Milosevic were unseated, a dubious prospect at the moment, the region might be spared a ground war.

The West's acceptance of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Croatia, and willingness to make de facto borders out of confrontation lines, gave Milosevic the green light in Kosovo. A negotiated compromise along the lines envisioned in Belgrade would legitimize the whole project. The price could well be another Milosevic decade. ■

Paul Hockenos is Balkan analyst at the Center for Transatlantic Security, a Berlin-based research institute. He recently returned from a two-year mission in Bosnia with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO

BY GEORGE KENNEY

WASHINGTON

Now that the dimensions of the human tragedy in Kosovo are becoming evident and the plight of hundreds of thousands of homeless, starving refugees more desperate, it is not merely a recrimination to say to NATO: Look what you set in motion. The West's mistake was not only using bombs as a substitute for diplomacy, but the lame, haphazard quality of diplomacy in the first place.

Richard Holbrooke—a private citizen who from time to time is handed responsibility for troubleshooting U.S. Balkan policy—was ubiquitous in late March, shuttling between Belgrade, Brussels and CNN, carrying threats to the Yugoslav government. Then, just before NATO started bombing, he ducked out of sight. Perhaps he was away on the speaking circuit, from which he earned \$370,000 last year, on top of his million dollar-plus salary at CS First Boston. Anyhow, last week he resurfaced on the talk shows, defending the bombing while depicting Slobodan Milosevic, in an anxious rationalization of Rambouillet, as the toughest negotiator he had ever come across. But a question remains that he is uniquely positioned to answer (indeed, it's one he should answer before the Senate confirms him as U.N. ambassador): Would 30,000 to 40,000 international monitors and security personnel in Kosovo back in February have

made any difference? Or would Milosevic's regime still have undertaken the same massive assault on Kosovo's Albanians?

After all, as a counter-proposal to the Rambouillet ultimatum, Milosevic indicated his willingness to accept a substantial international presence in Kosovo. The sticking point was NATO troops. Milosevic believed NATO would be a hostile, occupying force beyond effective international control, an unthinkable defenestration of Yugoslav sovereignty. But U.S. officials argued that only NATO could be trusted, in light of the poor performance of U.N. peacekeepers in Bosnia. Such a claim was disingenuous, to say the least, since almost from the outset of the U.N. Bosnia mission the United States sabotaged it by approving covert arms deliveries to the Muslims. Under the circumstances, the so-called U.N. Protection Force could neither maintain impartiality nor effectively quell local violence. Unhindered by a covert war, another U.N. peacekeeping force might perform ably in Kosovo.

The decisions that led to bombing apparently were not thought through in any fashion. The only explanation for them is a psychological one. Senior U.S. government officials so loathed the Milosevic regime that they undertook to destroy Yugoslavia to rid themselves of it and the uncomfortable media

events it produced. Part-time, gold brick diplomacy dwindled swiftly into utter disdain toward negotiations. They lost respect for the Serbs and sight of the valid aspects of Serbian positions. They no longer knew, or cared, who they were dealing with. Expecting no surprises, the United States lost its ability to listen.

It is not too late to get back to a negotiated cease-fire with multitudes of international monitors, aid workers and security personnel. All NATO would have to do is stop bombing and start talking. On the face of it, the well-being of most Kosovar Albanians would be infinitely improved.

A NATO-commanded force is still out of the question. But whereas before the war troops from NATO countries under a U.N. peace-keeping force could have been acceptable, at this point the Serbs probably would object to anything NATO-related. That's OK. The Russians want to supply troops, as do many other nations. Yugoslavian officials have repeatedly offered extensive political autonomy to Kosovo and still want a deal, including a comprehensive international mission. Through extended subsequent talks a more peaceful regional political arrangement might be found. At least this solution embodies a positive moral outcome. We must be clear on the alternative: Waging war until all NATO's conditions are met is simply immoral.

Military planners and moral philosophers must assume the worst-case scenario for continued bombing. The Yugoslav government, in the throes of a crisis that may shape the identity of the Serbian people for the next several hundred years, will not yield to NATO's terms. In Kosovo, the Albanian refugees, caught between bombing, starvation and increasingly wild Serbian forces, will start to die and be killed off by the thousands. To save the Albanians, NATO will invade. A bloody guerrilla war will ensue. It will spread up into Serbia itself, and down into Albania and Macedonia. Additional hundreds of thousands will be displaced and thousands upon thousands killed.

That's just in the Balkans. Russia will not stand idly by. No matter what the U.S. government tells itself about the tenuous nature of Russian ties to Serbia, the fact is that Russia sees NATO as a direct threat. The longer Washington brushes aside Russian warnings, the closer we get to the brink of a more dangerous war. Russia could supply equipment, resources and possibly troops, flying them into Yugoslavia very much the way the West did with the Berlin airlift. Does NATO dare shoot down Russian planes? The enormity of this debacle boggles the mind.

We can already hear the death knell of the United Nations. Statements by spokesman Jamie Shea that "NATO is not at war with anybody" ring hollow with the world outside of Europe and North America. U.N. conventions regarding state sovereignty adopted after World War II no longer seem to apply. Raw power is the new coin of the realm. So what's



NIKOLA SOLIC/REUTERS

Kosovar refugees crossing the border into Albania.

next? The forcible unification of China? An independent state for Kashmir? The liberation of Jerusalem?

And NATO, once we get down to brass tacks, has shown its new, expanded incarnation to be nothing but an aggressive, unpredictable threat to world peace. Whatever small benefits NATO might have offered in a post-Cold War world vanished abruptly in the dank fog over Yugoslavia. It is morally repugnant for NATO to sacrifice thousands of Serbian lives through bombing in propitiation of its conscience. The scale differs from Serbian attacks on Albanians, but there is a common, coarse indifference to the consequences. It is hard to say who may be tried for NATO war crimes or if the issue will ever be seriously considered, but crimes they are. NATO cannot bring the people its bombs have killed back to life.

We are angry, we are frustrated, we do not know what to do. Like the child with the pellet gun who kills creatures in the woods for sport, we bomb. In the words of Pogo: We have met the enemy, and he is us. ■

George Kenney, a former foreign service officer, writes regularly on international affairs.

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FOLLOW THE LEADER

BY SETH ACKERMAN

It has been less than six months since Operation Desert Fox and once again American missiles are loose in the world—with the news media doing their duty in the cheering section.

There are differences this time around, of course. The political establishment has not unanimously agreed that our “national interests” lie in such an obscure corner of the Balkans, or that the chosen method of destruction will accomplish its goals—and these hesitations are reflected in the media’s coverage. But as we’ve heard so many times, the “credibility” of NATO (read: the United States) is at stake, so everyone is putting aside their differences and pitching in for the war effort.

The first casualty of this war was dissent. Almost every major U.S. newspaper editorialized in favor of the NATO campaign when it began. None came out against it, despite an unusually high degree of elite misgiving. The *Boston Globe*, perhaps sensing another Vietnam in the making, laid out in detail what seemed to be a very good, cautionary “quagmire” hypothesis. But the editorialists could not bring themselves to actually oppose the bombing.

Neither have the news editors been prepared to let in any dissent. On April 1, Jiri Dienstbier, the chief U.N. human rights monitor for the former Yugoslavia, condemned the NATO bombing at a meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva. Dienstbier called the attack the “biggest mistake since the Vietnam War,” adding that the air strikes would only strengthen Milosevic politically and intensify his forces’ brutal treatment of the ethnic Albanian population. Not a single U.S. newspaper reported his remarks. Although *New York Times* reporter Elizabeth Olson was at the meeting to cover Dienstbier’s written report on the human rights situation in Kosovo, her dispatch did not mention his statement denouncing the airstrikes.

For a war supposedly waged over human rights, the attack on Yugoslavia has elicited a great deal of bloodlust from the pundits. *Times* foreign affairs columnist Thomas Friedman urged NATO to attack civilians, noting that “people tend to change their minds and adjust their goals as they see the price they are paying mount. Twelve days of surgical bombing was never going to turn Serbia around. Let’s see what 12 weeks of less than surgical bombing does. Give war a chance.”

Likewise, *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer bitterly derided the “war as waged by humanitarians, idealists, and the flotsam of the counterculture,” mocking the “excruciating selectivity” of NATO’s bombing, and applauding that “finally they are hitting targets—power plants, fuel depots, bridges, airports, television transmitters—that may indeed kill the enemy and civilians nearby.”

Perhaps this will at last put a stop to Milosevic’s shameful human rights abuses.



LARRY DOWNING/REUTERS

Clinton performs before his cheering section.

Then there is the “genocide” question, which has become a rallying cry for people who apparently have forgotten what the word means. A genocide is a systematic attempt to exterminate a group of people. The Serbian attack on Albanian Kosovars, as brutal as it has been, neither has accomplished nor was intended to accomplish this goal. The very fact that the Serbs have been expelling hundreds of thousands of Albanians from Kosovo serves as *prima facie* evidence that elimination is not what they have in mind. Yet the lead article in the April 11 *Times* “Week In Review” began by referring to the “accumulating evidence of a genocidal campaign unleashed against Kosovo’s Albanians by the Serbian government”—without informing readers what this evidence might be.

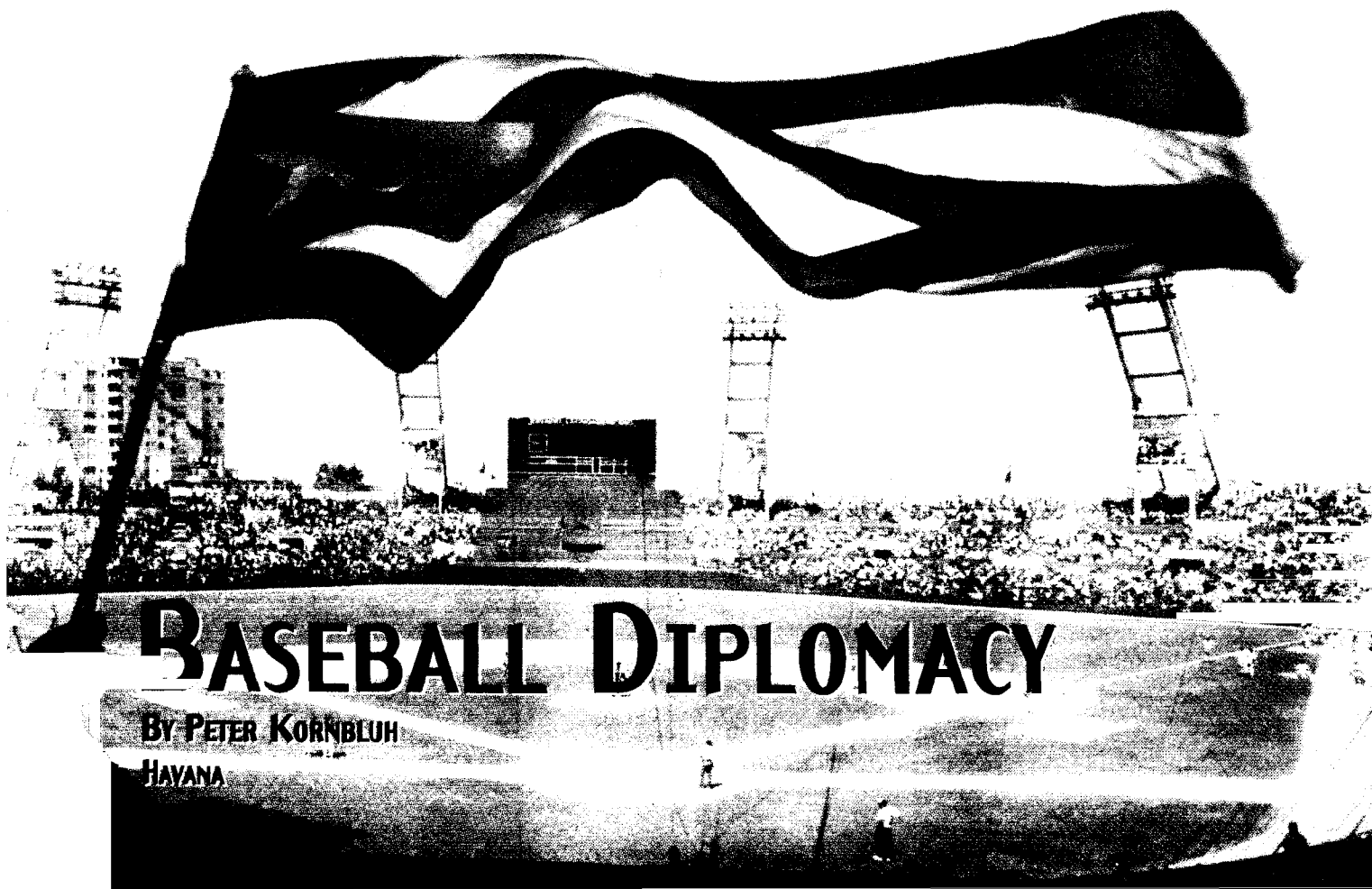
The article argued that the conduct of ordinary Serbs is “attracting the kinds of questions raised” in Daniel Jonah Goldhagen’s book, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, which argues that the Holocaust grew out of certain “eliminationist” tendencies of the German people that predisposed them to support and carry out Nazi policies. Thanks to the media, we might have another “genocidal people” on our hands. Even where genocide is not invoked, it is insinuated: “Thousands Vanish” was the headline over a *Times* article reporting that a column of refugees was turned around at the Albanian border and sent back to Kosovo.

While the Serbian assault on Kosovo does not resemble the Holocaust, what it does resemble, quite uncannily, is Turkey’s assault on its Kurdish population—an “ethnic cleansing” that has eluded the same kind of emotional outrage. A 1996 Human Rights Watch report noted that 2,685 Kurdish villages had been “completely or partially depopulated” with “estimates of the number of individuals displaced rang[ing] from 275,000 to two million.”

Those numbers have grown, but that did not prevent the media from cheering the February capture of Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan or putting a good word in for our Turkish allies. Stephen Rosenfeld, deputy editor of the *Post* editorial page—which gave full-blooded applause to the NATO war in Kosovo—chided in February that “it is easy for people elsewhere to advise the Turks to move over and grant the Kurds self-determination in the southeast. ... Turks should not be penalized for rejecting advice that none of those offering would ever volunteer to take for themselves.”

But don’t expect any bombs to fall on Ankara next week. ■

Seth Ackerman is on the staff of FAIR.



It was the fifth inning of game one of Cuba's 1999 World Series. As raucous fans hollered chants in the stands, Sandy Alderson, vice president of operations for U.S. Major League Baseball, left his second-row seat behind home plate and proceeded to a small office in Havana's Latin American Stadium. Alderson told officials of Cuba's sports institute that—with less than 24 hours before the Baltimore Orioles were due to arrive for a historic game with the Cuban All-Stars—there was a problem. The Orioles were worried that Fidel Castro's government was distributing tickets only to Communist Party apparatchiks, thwarting the "people-to-people" concept the baseball game was intended to promote.

After phone calls to the highest levels of the Cuban government, the Orioles received more than 400 tickets to distribute to Cubans of their choice and the last pothole on the road to baseball diplomacy was smoothed over. But this episode illustrates the basic tension in U.S.-Cuban relations: Americans make demands on how Castro conducts Cuba's internal affairs—more out of a need for political cover than true concern for participatory democracy—and Cuba's aging revolutionary regime resists on the principle of national sovereignty. Had the U.S. government been involved, Cuba might well have canceled the game.

But the U.S. government was not involved and, on March 28, baseball fans heard the opening call of "play ball" for a professional game between the United States and Cuba for the first time since 1959. Baltimore eked out an 11-inning, 3-2 victory. The rematch set for May 3 at Baltimore's Camden Yards stadium is nearly sold out.

PHOTO: ADALBERTO ROQUE/AFP

While baseball's political impact on U.S.-Cuba remains to be seen, the game represents "people-to-people" power in its truest form—a clear triumph of citizen diplomacy over the stagnation of official policy. The Orioles' historic trip to Havana also included a plane load of 60 kids from the Baltimore/Washington area—the next generation of baseball diplomats—who played several sandlot games with Cuban kids, attended a Cuban World Series game and learned, as one told a reporter, that "Cubans are the same as you and me." While the U.S. press reported that the state-controlled Cuban media carried no information about the game, nearly everyone with a television set or radio tuned in. In the United States, fans watched on ESPN.

"I designate you all ambassadors of goodwill," Scott Armstrong announced to the kid ballplayers and their entourage of coaches, chaperones and parents who just arrived in Havana on a charter flight from Baltimore. A legendary Washington figure—Armstrong served on the Watergate Committee, was an investigative reporter at the *Washington Post* and co-authored *The Brethren* with Bob Woodward—he worked as the Orioles designated hitter to make the game happen. "This is people-to-people," he added. "We are here to exchange good feelings around baseball."

Armstrong went on to relate the three-year saga of negotiations, political obstacles and bilateral problems that made the game "difficult to line up." The Clinton administration created most of the difficulties, particularly Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. To underscore this point, Armstrong handed out Albright's statement on the

game and urged the group to send her the message that "baseball is not a part of U.S. foreign policy."

The Orioles game marks the culmination of almost 25 years of extra-official efforts to bring the United States and Cuba together on the ball field. In 1974, then Baseball Commissioner Bowie Kuhn first proposed to take major league players to Havana. At the time, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's aides wrote in top secret memoranda that baseball could be to "a good way to break the ice between countries separated by decades of hostility" and a vehicle for "bridging the gap between the Bay of Pigs and a new relationship with Castro."

Kissinger, however, vetoed sports diplomacy because he did not want to lose control over public attitudes toward Cuba. The Clinton administration, on the other hand, tried hard to appropriate—and corrupt—the concept of "people-to-people" as a weapon against Castro, and attempted to control the negotiations over every aspect of the game, nearly undermining the three years of work it took to bring the Orioles to Cuba.

In 1995, Armstrong began looking for individual U.S. players willing to go to Cuba. Through a mutual friend, the actor Mike Farrell, he met Richard Shaeffer, a "Jerry McGuire"-type sports agent who knew the ballplayers and team owners. Shaeffer convinced Armstrong that finding a team willing to play in Havana would be more feasible; at Shaeffer's suggestion, they approached the billionaire owner of the Baltimore Orioles, Peter Angelos.

During the 1995 season, Angelos held several meetings in his stadium skybox at Camden Yards. Cuban government officials visited during one game and endorsed the proposal. Armstrong convinced Clinton's then National Security Adviser Anthony Lake to meet with Angelos during another game and discuss baseball diplomacy. One negotiator recalls Lake's position: "I'm to the right of Attila the Hun on Cuba. But I'm soft on baseball."

Nevertheless, the State Department denied the Orioles' first application for a license to go to Cuba in 1995 on the grounds that a baseball game would be "too high profile." In February 1996, Cuba shot down two unarmed planes over the Florida Straits and the momentum of baseball diplomacy came to a halt. Armstrong revived it in 1998. But, according to Saul Landau, a documentary filmmaker and Cuba specialist who helped with translation, "the U.S. created an obstacle course" making the project nearly impossible.

Imperial-minded State Department officials, particularly Cuban desk officers Michael Rannenberger and John Hamilton, set up a series of conditions for the game's approval. No profits could go to the Cuban state; the Orioles would have restricted access to services in Cuba (They could not hire Cuban facilitators or translators, or pay for Cuban television rights and film crews). So that the game "would not be a reward

to being a good commie," as one negotiator recalls the U.S. position, not all tickets could go to loyalists of the regime.

On Jan. 5, Albright jeopardized months of intense talks by prematurely announcing the game as part of a Clinton policy package to "provide the people of Cuba with hope in their struggle." Without consulting the Cubans or the Orioles negotiators, Albright declared that the United States wanted all financial proceeds of the game to go to Caritas, a Catholic organization in Cuba; Cuba wanted to donate the proceeds to Hurricane Mitch relief.

Negotiations collapsed. Cuba delayed a trip by Angelos. When he finally visited in mid-January, no high official would meet with him. Indeed, until mid-March, the fate of the game was unclear because of the disagreement over the proceeds. The delay effectively drained the profit margin from the game. By the time the game was set, U.S. networks did not have enough time to sell commercials. (Major League Baseball had to pay ESPN \$500,000 to broadcast the game.) With no profits to distribute, the dispute over proceeds was

effectively nullified and negotiations to finalize arrangements for the games were completed.



Former pitcher Fidel Castro shares his secrets.

"I love Cuba and Cuba loves me," says 12-year-old Anthony Brown, a member of Elementary Baseball, a sports program for inner city kids in Washington. On the second day of their trip, the kids visited the Martyrs of Barbados Sports Initiation School—a ball park for young Cubans dedicated to Cuba's Olympic fencing team, who were killed in 1976 when their plane was bombed in an anti-Castro terrorist attack.

The U.S. kids lost the pick-up game, but the defeat didn't really matter to the players. Anthony befriended a young Cuban and promptly gave him his mitt. After a second pick-up game the next day, according to coach John McCarthy, the Elementary Baseball group gave the Cubans their entire equipment bag. "I met with their coach," McCarthy says, and "told him that our students were from a part of Washington that was similar to their neighborhood and we didn't want to insult or patronize him or his players by implying this was a handout, but rather came from the heart with friendship and respect."

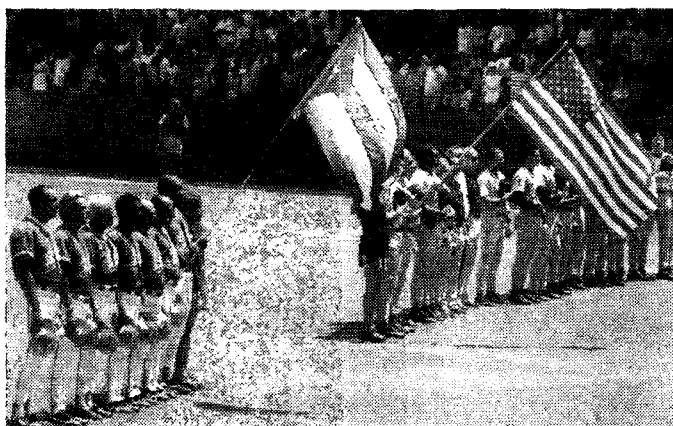
When the Cuban All-Stars and the Orioles finally met on the field, the most dramatic moment came when the entire Orioles team approached one side of the mound carrying the U.S. flag, and the Cuban team approached the other side with the Cuban flag. Both teams faced Castro, flanked by Angelos, Commissioner of Baseball Bud Selig and Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke. As the Cuban anthem played, most of the Baltimore players held their hands over their hearts; when the Stars and Stripes played, the Cuban team did not. Nevertheless, Castro stood respectfully, as did every one of the 55,000 Cuban fans.

By coincidence, March 28 also marked the culmination of two years of music diplomacy—an international project known as "Musical Bridges," which brought such recording artists as Bonnie Raitt, Joan Osborne, Jimmy Buffett, Burt Bacharach, Mick Fleetwood and dozens of other stars to Cuba. Teaming up

with Cuban musicians, they spent the last week of March writing songs together and jamming late into the night at various Havana venues. After the game, the musicians performed before thousands at Havana's Karl Marx Theater.

The crowd at the game was decidedly working-class, while the crowd at the concert later was rather bohemian, made up of Cuban college students and artists. The concept of U.S. and Cuban musicians spending a week writing songs together sounds better in principle than in practice—but the political message resounded clearly: "Big bad wolf you are the fool/Cuba is just way too cool," sang Bonnie Raitt (with the ubiquitous Woody Harrelson on back-up vocals).

"They told us not to say anything political," hip hop artist Michael Franti told the crowd. "But I don't care. It's time to lift the embargo." The concert hall erupted in applause.



MARIO TAMAYO/NEWSPHOTO

The pregame festivities.

From Cuba's perspective, March 28 was a grand slam. "There is much more curiosity about this game than hostility," a fan named Fernando told me during batting practice. For Cuban fans who had long wondered whether Cuban baseball was in the same league as the Major League, the answer was yes. The Cuban team pushed the Orioles into extra innings, out-hit and out-pitched them. An informal poll of Havana taxi drivers showed that nobody in Cuba was a bad sport about losing, calling the matchup "*Un juego bueno*" ("a good game").

The demeanor on the field resonated politically as well. The game and the concert, notes Ricardo Alarcon, head of Cuba's National Assembly, "reflect the possibility that can exist between two countries to have normal, fruitful, peaceful exchanges when they are based on mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and independence."

For the U.S. government, the postgame scorecard is mixed. To be sure, as one top secret memo predicted in 1975, the baseball game will undoubtedly help to "undercut the demonology in Cuban propaganda" about the United States. Cubans on the street saw the game, as one chauffeur put it, as "a small light" in 40 years of dark U.S.-Cuban relations. The good feeling generated inside Cuba from the game will make it harder for the Castro regime to successfully mount a full-scale war of words against the United States in the future.

At the same time, the widespread public focus on Cuba created by the game and the concert has benched the Clinton administration's policy of trying to isolate Castro. With such high-level delegations of baseball players and star musicians traveling to Cuba and the May 3 rematch at Camden Yards fast becoming the hottest ticket in town, the U.S. policy of restricting travel to the island has never seemed so inane. The restrictions "are beneath the dignity of a great nation," says Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), who attended the game and promised that the next gesture of people-to-people diplomacy would be shipping a case of Ben and Jerry's ice cream to Havana—if he can obtain the prerequisite Treasury Department license.

"I don't give what the government thinks much consideration," Woody Harrelson told me, when asked what he thought of the travel restrictions. "It's about the people, and the people here are awfully nice."

The kids left with the same impression. "When we arrived, Cubans greeted us with hugs and high fives," Anthony Brown of Elementary Baseball wrote in his trip journal. "They never disrespected us in any way. I made a lot of friends throughout the trip." Fourteen-year-old teammate Anthony Taylor wrote that the Cubans provided "respect and love to me and other Americans. I gave them the same respect they showed me."

The rematch in Baltimore likely will reinforce that attitude, and other Major League teams are now clamoring to go to Havana for more exhibition games. As the goodwill of baseball diplomacy attracts the attention of more and more citizens, it is increasingly clear that the U.S. policy of isolating Cuba has struck out. ■

Peter Kornbluh writes frequently on U.S.-Cuban relations and is the editor, most recently, of *The Bay of Pigs Declassified: The Secret CIA Report on the Invasion of Cuba* (The New Press).

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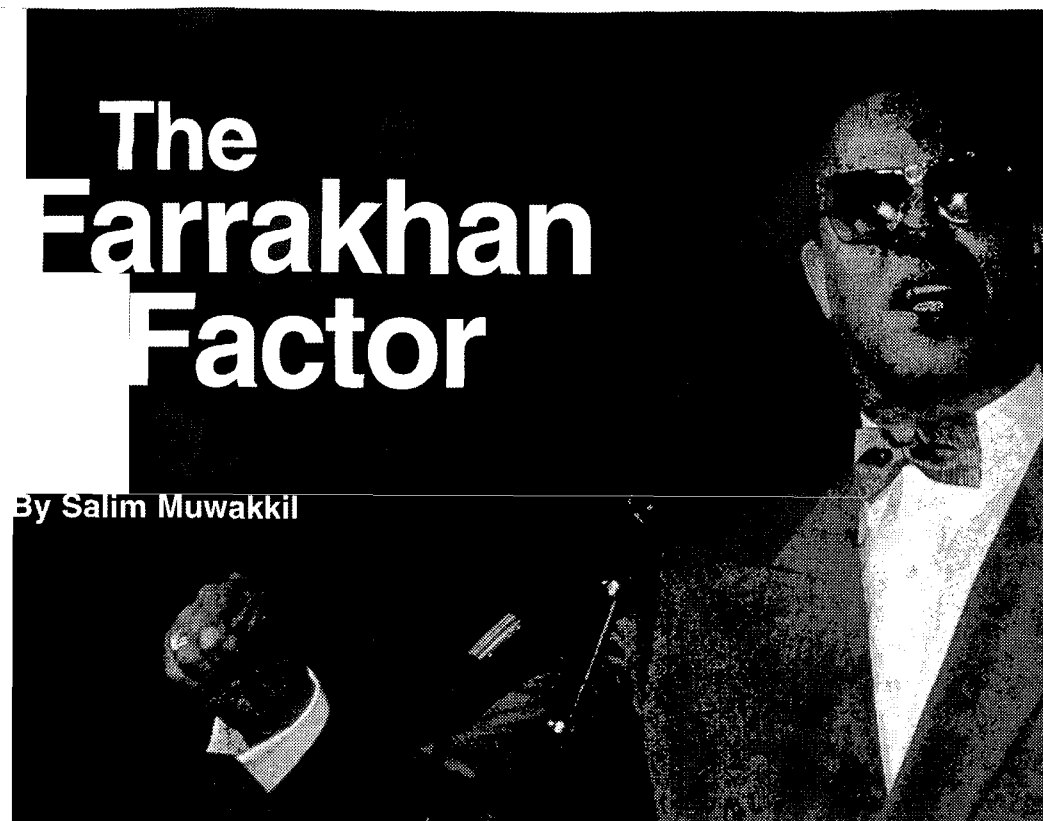
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The Farrakhan Factor

By Salim Muwakkil



An America without Louis Farrakhan would be a ship lacking one steady hand on the rudder. To many Americans this may seem like a grandiose assessment of Farrakhan's significance. That's because the mainstream media has been so devoted to caricaturing him, they have failed to explore the depth of his appeal.

In fact, the 65-year-old head of the Nation of Islam may be black America's most influential figure. Not only does he appeal to older black nationalists and youthful hip-hoppers, but Farrakhan is also big among cultural conservatives who appreciate his moralistic oratory and ascetic practices. Under his leadership, the Nation of Islam has grown into the country's largest and most cohesive black organization that—unlike most other African-American groups—is totally independent of white philanthropy.

Since its mysterious origins in Depression Era Detroit, however, the Nation of Islam also has professed a eugenic theology that demonizes white people and deifies black people. Throughout its history, the group has exhibited cult-like tendencies and a paramilitary, authoritarian style with little tolerance for critics.

When the group's patriarch Elijah Muhammad died in 1975, his son Wallace D. Muhammad (now known as Imam W. Deen Mohammed) took over, transformed the organization into an American outpost of Islamic orthodoxy, changed its name and discouraged expressions of black nationalism. Farrakhan broke away two years later to restore Elijah's race-centered vision and re-established the Nation of Islam as a separate group.

More than 20 years into his leadership, Farrakhan is now attempting to make some of the same changes that forced him out of Wallace Muhammad's orbit. In recent public speeches, Farrakhan has been tempering the stark messages of black

supremacy and emphasizing the Islamic concern with religious submission and atonement. This is therefore a delicate period of transition for the Nation of Islam and without Farrakhan to husband the change, it almost certainly would fail. The consequences of failure, however, are likely to be much more than mere doctrinal disagreement. Forces currently constrained under Farrakhan's charismatic and authoritarian leadership would be unleashed and apt to clash. The ramifications would reach far beyond the organizational boundaries of the Nation or its rivals—just as the internal squabble between Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad did in the mid-'60s—and have a significant impact on black America.

Thoughts of a world without Farrakhan's controversial presence were triggered when the March 16 edition of the Nation of Islam's house organ, *The Final Call*, broke the news that he was ill. In an unusually candid appraisal of his health, Jabril Muhammad, an aide to Farrakhan, wrote, "My Brother is struggling to overcome the forces of death. He has been gravely ill since near the beginning of January." Muhammad added that in the 44 years he had known Farrakhan, he had "never seen him this sick before ... to me, at one point, he was at death's door." Although the article ended describing a "miracle" recovery, it provoked considerable concern among his followers.

Village Voice writer Peter Noel first reported the story. His article not only touched on Farrakhan's health problems, but also raised the larger issue of succession, sparking intense anger among Nation members. "I found out that he was sicker than portrayed," Noel says. "Some high-ranking officials suspected he was poisoned." Noel added some provocative speculation on a murder plot. His story provoked a frenzy of mainstream inter-

est in Farrakhan's plight and news accounts with obituary undertones began popping up everywhere. Assessments of Farrakhan's life were churned up and all the well-worn clichés were dusted off and deployed. And the mainstream media once again obsessed over his occasional expressions of anti-Jewish sentiment.

An offensive editorial cartoon published during the flurry of stories even managed to make allies of Farrakhan's followers and many Jews. *New York Post* cartoonist Sean Delonas tastelessly drew two big-nosed Jewish doctors ready to operate on Farrakhan with a chain saw. A line across Farrakhan's neck indicated the area to be sliced. The caption read, "Vadda Yuh Worried About Yuh Big Meshuganah, You're in Good Hands."

Why do mainstream journalists focus so relentlessly on concerns that are so peripheral to Farrakhan's appeal? Their preoccupation with anti-Semitism is a product of poor critical analysis and journalistic malfeasance. The surprising success of Farrakhan's 1995 Million Man March should have alerted the country's media establishment to its mistake. Instead, the march startled and frightened an American public fed on news that Farrakhan was nothing but a ranting demagogue with no message but hatred.

A more responsible media would have related Farrakhan's appeal to African-Americans' real sense of despair and disappointment with white America's lack of commitment to racial equity. By averting their glance from the anguish in America's black communities—the incessant complaints of police harassment, racial "profiling" in all institutions, the toll of the racist war on drugs, etc.—the mainstream media ignores the issues that fertilized Farrakhan's growth.

Many African-Americans regarded reports of Farrakhan's grave illness with dread. Already there are widespread laments about the vacuum in black leadership. Were Farrakhan to die, many believe that vacuum would become a veritable black hole. "Unfortunately, many of us don't really begin to value the contributions of our leadership until we consider their absence," says Conrad Worrill, chairman of the National Black United Front. "Farrakhan has been deep in the heart of black people's struggle since the '50s, and he has truly earned all of our respect—regardless of our ideological differences."

Worrill resists lending credence to media queries about Farrakhan's impending demise. He surmises that their interest in his illness is fueled by a barely concealed glee. "The mainstream media is not really interested in Farrakhan's well-being, except for their wishful thinking about his death or for the sensationalized coverage devoted to the issue of succession. They don't realize how much the minister is loved within the black community and they really don't care."

It turns out that Farrakhan was suffering from symptoms related to his treatment for the prostate cancer that he was diagnosed with in 1991. He was hospitalized at Howard University in Washington, where he underwent surgery.

His doctors now say he is recovering well; the cancer has been in remission for several years and his doctors report no signs of a recurrence.

Yet an ailing Farrakhan suggests larger issues. Who would succeed him? Would the Nation continue its slow march toward Islamic orthodoxy and emulate Imam W. Deen Mohammed's group, or will it reverse directions and march back toward black supremacy? Will Farrakhan acolytes, like Chief of Staff Leonard Farrakhan Muhammad or national spokesman Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammad get the nod? Or will fundamentalists like Silis Muhammad, who heads the rival Lost Found Nation of Islam and still hews closely to the eugenic doctrines of Elijah Muhammad, rise to the fore?

What about the volatile Khalid Abdul Muhammad, leader of the New Black Muslim Movement and the New Black Panther Party? Khalid Muhammad, who once served as head of the Nation of Islam's security arm and as

Farrakhan's national assistant spokesman, has a fervent following of militant youth. His blistering, racist rhetoric forced his boss to fire him in 1994. He went on to organize last fall's controversial Million Youth March, which many interpreted as a sort of coming-out party for his own emergence into national leadership and a staging ritual for the fiery and uncompromising brand of black nationalism he represents. "I think Khalid has burned his bridges behind

him," Noel says, "and has opted for a new direction with himself in the leadership position."

Farrakhan's eloquence and charisma has made him black America's pre-eminent public orator and his group's most effective recruiter. The Nation had combined the oratorical tradition of black religiosity, social rituals that enforce peer-group conformity and paramilitary discipline into a potent organization that is a pervasive feature of black America. But the linchpin in that framework has been a charismatic leader, and, from Malcolm X to Farrakhan, the Nation always has had such a leader.

Without such leadership, the Nation is likely to drift. There are few leaders capable of continuing the group's slow march toward Islamic orthodoxy without severe challenges from those who still hold fast to Elijah Muhammad's racial determinism. The fear is that Farrakhan's absence would provoke a frenzied scramble for power that would fracture the group and endanger peaceful coexistence between contending ideologies.

But to many critics of the Nation, such a period of confusion would provide an opportunity for another vision of black liberation. The Black Radical Congress, for one, represents an alternative view to Farrakhan's conservative "atonement" model. And while its leadership would be loathe to interpret Farrakhan's eventual departure as a golden opportunity to propose a more radical vision, that's just what it would be. ■

"The mainstream media is not really interested in Farrakhan's well-being. They don't realize how much the minister is loved within the black community and they really don't care."

Electronic Herd Mentality

By David Moberg

Reading Thomas L. Friedman's *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, I was slightly annoyed at first by this *New York Times* foreign affairs columnist's glib, cutesy and self-satisfied depiction of the new global economy—which started precisely 10 years ago, he assures us, citing Merrill Lynch ads as the

**The Lexus and the Olive Tree:
Understanding Globalization**
By Thomas L. Friedman
Farrar, Straus & Giroux
416 pages, \$27.50

authoritative statement on the subject. Then his smug, elitist arrogance began to rankle more. As I read on, his sloppy reasoning, careless deployment of data (when it was rarely used), contradictory assertions and muddled concepts became ever more infuriating. There's nothing wrong with a good anecdote to illustrate a point. But this book rests so exclusively on a skewed selection of "stories" to buttress arguments made through imprecise metaphors that it's hard to take seriously.

His book is on one level the travelogue of a "tourist with an attitude," as he describes himself, but much of his tourism occurs on the slopes of ski resorts or other elite settings—intimate conversations with high-level government officials and bond traders, for example. When he encounters someone below ministerial level in his worldly jaunts, he is typically comforted to discover that they just really want to be more like him, or some other American.

To judge from his stories, every street vendor in the developing world is a secret stock market speculator, and all children of former revolutionaries are now aspiring management consultants. Indeed, Friedman's "attitude" qualifies him as an updated, late-20th century, Thinkpad-toting, free market worshipping version of the Ugly American of yore. By the end of the book, the shameless American triumphalism is so thick that it would make a United States Information Agency copywriter blush.

Friedman describes himself as a "globalist," someone who believes that the

Cold War international system has been superseded by a new system dominated by the workings of a global market, which is more comprehensively and intensely integrated than ever before. Now "all politics is global," not that there's much room for politics left, as the world shrinks ever smaller and markets rule. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the break-up of the Soviet bloc certainly represented a geopolitical turning point. But this change was not the result of a technological imperative, what Friedman archly labels the Microchip Immune Deficiency Syndrome, which he credits with the downfall of both General Motors and the Soviet Union.

Leaving aside the flawed argument about GM's problems, there were many causes of the Soviet collapse, including the internal political crisis of an ossified, undemocratic bureaucracy and the economic failings of Soviet-style planning. And the collapse also was caused by the long Cold War led by the United States to eliminate any prospects of rival systems to capitalism. (Friedman does briefly note that American military power still lies behind its dominance of the new global economy.)

The new global economy began emerging within the old Cold War system. With the demise of the shaky, unattractive alternative, capitalists then felt more freedom to escalate demands that governments jettison humane trappings that had tempered social discontent within capitalist systems.

**All children of former
revolutionaries are
now aspiring
consultants.**

Now there is no alternative to the most untamed, brutal form of American-style laissez-faire capitalism, Friedman insists. There's no Asian model of capitalism, no Western European social democratic model, nothing but Americanization. And that's good, he says. If an omniscient architect had tried to cre-

ate the perfect system for the global economy, Friedman concludes, he would have made a country exactly as the United States is today. Other countries must try to mimic us as best they can, or else they'll be trampled by "the electronic herd," Friedman's cute description of global financial markets, as it takes its money elsewhere. Of course, if the current form of globalization had not been largely imposed through American economic, political and military power, then the United States might not have seemed so perfect.

The heart of Friedman's argument, however, is cast in political terms that are fundamentally misleading. The new global economy, he contends, is a result of the "democratization" of technology, finance and information. By democratization of technology he means the spread of computers, modems, cell phones and various digital technologies. Democratization of finance refers to the proliferation of new financial instruments—such as commercial bonds, derivatives, junk bonds and tradable securities created out of debts—that investors can easily buy and sell in financial markets (unlike an old-fashioned bank loan to a factory owner, for example). Democratization of information refers to satellite dishes, the Internet and the globalization of cable TV.

This is a pernicious abuse of the idea of "democracy." If democracy means that the people have power to govern their society, globalization is more often the antithesis of democracy than its promoter. Also, there is little that is democratizing about the phenomena Friedman selected. First, a minority of individuals, even in wealthy societies, are investors, despite the rise of mutual funds. An even smaller number of financial traders and managers make most decisions.

Yes, most people do watch television, but even with 500 channels there is little more information; and with the partial exception of the Internet, the mass media increasingly are controlled by a few large corporations. Rupert Murdoch's dominance, not democracy, is what's truly representative of information globalization.

Similarly, even though computer technology is becoming widely available in the United States, Friedman's main point

is that computers aid the globalization of production, making it easier to shift office work from expensive American or European clerical workers to poorly paid Indians, for example. Who makes the decision about where the work goes or how much anyone is paid? Not the workers, in either India or the richer countries where the jobs once were, but rather a few transnational corporate executives. This is democracy?

Furthermore, according to Friedman, this so-called "democratization" of finance, technology and information has created a world in which every nation must submit itself to the discipline of the "electronic herd." They must put on the "golden straitjacket" of depoliticized management of each country, as if it were just another corporation seeking investment from international money managers rather than a full, complex human society. Friedman is big on bondage, especially to bond markets. Harsh discipline by these electronic masters of the universe is the only hope for any country, rich or poor, big or small. Yet many countries, especially for the bulk of their populations, have seen nothing but hardship as a result of the discipline and constraint imposed by the International Monetary Fund or global financial markets.

The most powerful "constituents" of any government leader now are not his own citizens, Friedman observes, but foreign investors who may never even visit the country and may know next to nothing about its inhabitants. They vote with their dollars. This is plutocracy, pure and simple rule of the wealthy, not democracy. The "golden straitjacket" also removes much of the decision-making from the political realm, hardly a democratic development.

Friedman nevertheless celebrates "globalution" from above that forces countries like Thailand and Korea to adopt rules that suit international investors, from greater transparency of financial markets to American accounting principles. With piercing hindsight, Friedman now concludes that all the Asian crisis countries were doomed to collapse, and it's a good thing to destroy

their "crony capitalism." But just before their collapse, the wise men of the IMF, the World Bank and the "electronic herd" were praising all these countries. There was hardly a peep from any of them about Suharto in Indonesia. The crisis weakened him, but a popular movement ultimately toppled him, not Friedman's "globalutionaries" on Wall Street.



Although Friedman concludes that there is no way to soften the "brutal" nature of the global economy, he also insists that countries can eventually become wealthy enough to add a little padding to their straitjacket so it's not so uncomfortable. He argues for a very flimsy safety net—which he imagines, again relying on metaphor to take the place of argument, as a "trampoline" that will gently bounce the fallen victims of globalization back to new heights. But the "electronic herd," by his account, does not like such soft-hearted moves, and the globalizing forces work against democratic politics that might try to strike a different balance with capital.

It would be more appropriate to talk about "marketization" of society, not democratization. The trend to market society—where, in the words of insightful economic journalist Robert Kuttner, everything is for sale—may give more power to individuals who have money to spend. But it is not democracy. Likewise, despite Friedman's selective examples such as Internet bookseller Amazon.com, it is simply not true that the barriers of entry to most industries have dramatically declined as a result of globalization and new technologies.

Think about autos, steel, airplanes, airlines, transportation networks and even computer chips and many consumer electronics: The trend is toward concentration, global alliances and increasingly high barriers to entry. There is greater decentralization and dispersion of many activities, but ultimate control remains centralized, even when managers talk about the need for "teamwork."

The central metaphor of the book's title reflects Friedman's view of the conflict engendered by globalization. On the one hand are people preoccupied with building and buying the Lexus (Friedman's personal car of choice), which symbolizes the "age old" striving for prosperity, modernization and a better world. On the other hand are people preoccupied with the olive tree, which symbolizes rootedness

and social identity. This treats any debate over globalization—including all the specifics of hard money and weak social safety nets—as simply a clash of tradition and modernity, a heavily loaded and shop-worn polarity.

Innovation is everything, he says. Anyone who isn't in the "fast world" is a "turtle" about to become road kill. Friedman declares Joseph Schumpeter the economist of the global era, citing his description of the "creative destruction" unleashed by capitalism. But in his most famous work, Schumpeter, no advocate of socialism, famously concluded, "Can capitalism survive? No, I do not think it can." Capitalism has survived better than he expected, but any analysis of globalization requires equal attention to both its creative destruction and its plain old destructive destruction.

Friedman gives little attention to the ways in which globalization has been harmful to workers, poor countries and the environment. He notes that inequality has soared globally in recent decades, but he discusses it in a narrow way designed to avoid tough questions. He focuses his attention entirely on the "winner-take-all phenomenon." Globalization, through television in particular, expands the market for sports superstars

like Michael Jordan, making it possible for a few to make hundreds of times the income of lesser but still good NBA players. While this is true, it says very little about why the earnings of most Americans stagnated or declined over the past quarter century or why nearly anonymous American corporate executives make more than 200 times their average worker's salary, compared with much lower multiples for German or Japanese executives.

As Friedman portrays the world, there is no rational basis for criticizing corporate globalization and free market fundamentalism. But he does acknowledge that globalization generates contradictions and opponents—all irrational. The main threat comes from bizarre individual terrorists who can blow up buildings and cripple computer systems, he says. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad is depicted as a loony for complaining that the global economy has become "anarchic." But international financier George Soros, who is the nearly sainted leader of the "electronic herd" in Friedman's account, has just written at length about how intrinsically unstable and anarchic global financial markets are. The financial markets are "never irrational indefinitely," Friedman says. Some consolation to its victims.

However, even that claim is wrong. As Soros and others argue, financial markets always are to some degree irrational. Much of the financial crisis that Friedman assures us will be "the norm" for the global era is a result of bad lending or investment decisions by banks and speculators, like Long-Term Capital Management, the notorious failed hedge fund that the Clinton administration spent billions bailing out last fall. These are the taskmasters before whom all must now genuflect. This is not just undemocratic. It's stupid. The "electronic herd," stealing the money of the very people whose rights they have trampled, rely on governments—despite their claims that government is irrelevant.

There has been a shift of power in the world, not simply from states to entrepreneurs, as Friedman says, but from citizens and workers to capital. It is striking that in all of his discussion of the distinctive features of globalization,

Friedman never discusses the rise of transnational corporations' power. Yet these corporations are social creations, the product of laws and legislatures that grant them rights. Friedman is adamant about the need to enforce the rule of law globally on behalf of these corporations. But in his single reference in the book to worker rights, he puts "rights" in quotation marks to indicate he doesn't believe they exist. There is, however, a body of international law that has reaffirmed repeatedly in recent decades the rights of workers, especially the right to organize. Such rules of law must be enforced globally if there is to be democracy.

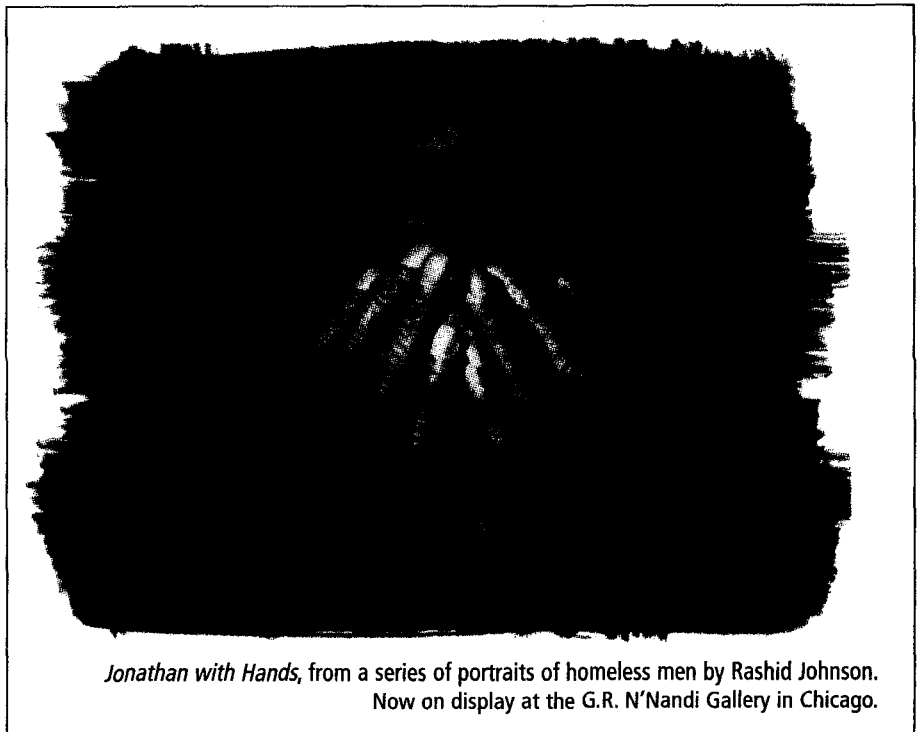
Friedman saves his most audacious claim to the end. It's not technology, markets or even the three "democratizations" that drive globalization, he says. Instead, the "fundamental truth about globalization" is this: "Globalization emerges from below, from street level, from people's very souls and from their very deepest aspirations," that is, "the basic human desire for a better life."

But this lyrical interlude is pure fantasy. Sure, people want a better life, and some of them want McDonald's, Disney and Coke, but do they really choose to work under harsh conditions for \$1 a day and lose the communities and cultures that give them identity? No. Even Friedman

says, "They don't really have any choice." Globalization did not arise from their aspirations; they are making the most of it, just as their forefathers made the best of droughts or typhoons. The real America may have much to recommend, but the fantasy America sold around the world is a powerful "brand name" that bears the same relation to this country as most ads do to their products.

At times Friedman talks about softening the edges of globalization, providing "filters" to limit cultural homogenization, protecting the environment or otherwise muting the few self-destructive tendencies he acknowledges in globalization. But he rejects as wrongheaded and impossible such modest and potentially valuable measures as the Tobin tax on international financial transactions or capital controls that a wide array of mainstream economists and politicians now take seriously. He offers only a thin gruel of weak palliatives and then relies on the wisdom of elites to preserve cultures and environments.

The last thing he could tolerate is real popular democracy. Judging from most polls, the overwhelming majority of Americans do not share his golden view of globalization, and for good reason. If we had a stronger democracy, we might discover that there really are alternatives. ■



Jonathan with Hands, from a series of portraits of homeless men by Rashid Johnson. Now on display at the G.R. N'Nandi Gallery in Chicago.

Trail of Tears

By Philip Connors

If those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it, then officials in the U.S. Department of Interior charged with managing private leases on Native American land are an especially obtuse bunch.

According to recent reports in the *New York Times*, the agency has done

The Earth Shall Weep: A History of Native America
By James Wilson
Atlantic Monthly Press
466 pages, \$27

such a poor job accounting for fees paid by oil, gas and timber companies that as much as \$10 billion of trust fund money earmarked for Native Americans has never left the federal treasury. Records have been found covered in rat feces in decrepit files or simply lost altogether in fires and floods. And an Interior Department attorney recently told U.S. District Court Judge Royce C. Lamberth that he had been ordered by a superior to destroy documents related to the trust fund debacle. Those documents reportedly would have proved damaging to the agency's defense in a class-action lawsuit brought by 500,000 Native Americans seeking the money they are owed on the leases.

This is an old and familiar betrayal. The government, acting as broker, convinces Native Americans desperate for a measure of financial autonomy that this time its word is good. Only the promises—like the sham peace treaties of yore—are lies, and the money never comes. And the Native Americans, against all odds, are forced to seek redress in that most unreliable of institutions, the U.S. court system.

One hopes this occasion will prove different. There are encouraging signs, such as the recent startling decision by Lamberth that found Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin in contempt of court for failing to produce agency records by a court ordered deadline. But if that long history from which we seem incapable of learning is any indication, such hopes will be in vain. It is a history that James Wilson recounts in his new book in such relentless detail

that the reader, like the very earth in his title, can do nothing finally but weep.

Wilson, a British documentary writer whose award-winning television series *Savagery and the American Indian* appeared on BBC2 and the Arts & Entertainment channel, has spent more than two decades working among the indigenous peoples of North America. Like any good historian, he has done his time with the documents. But what sets this history apart from so much of the scholarship of Native America is his recognition of its one-sidedness, imbued as it is with many of the assumptions of European intellectual inquiry.

One of the more pernicious assumptions is a belief in the primacy of the written word over the spoken in the recording of history. This distinction tends to cast suspicion on narratives maintained in oral traditions, as so much of the experience of Native America was and continues to be. Tragically, entire histories of certain tribes or nations are lost to us because all their members were extinguished by disease, starvation or outright butchery. In other cases, rich stories are still accessible to someone curious enough to search them out and humble enough to pause and listen. Wilson is both. Thus he reports the complex, poetic and richly imaginative words of someone like Speckled Snake of the Creek Nation:

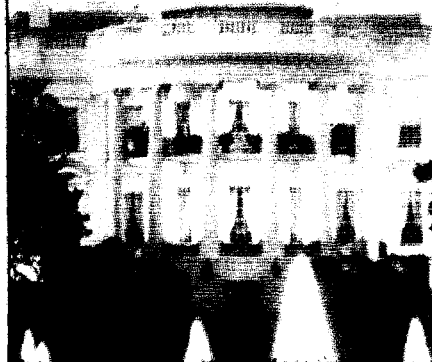
Brothers, I have listened to many talks from our great father. When he first came over the wide waters, he was but a little man ... very little. His legs were cramped by sitting long in his big boat, and he begged for a little land to light his fire on. ... But when the white man had warmed himself before the Indians' fire and filled himself with their hominy, he became very large. With a step he bestrode the mountains, and his feet covered the plains and the valleys. His hand grasped the eastern and western sea, and his head rested on the moon. Then he became our Great Father. He loves his red children, and he said, 'Get a little further, lest I tread on thee.' ... Brothers, I have listened to a great many talks

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from our father. But they always began and ended in this—'Get a little further; you are too near me.'

Storytelling is our way of defining ourselves, of giving form, shape and meaning to our experiences. But Wilson recognizes a parallel truth: Our stories can circle back and define us, shaping the way we perceive the world instead of merely recording our perceptions. In searching for a coherent explanation of the systematic decimation of Native Americans by European settlers, Wilson looks to myths of human origin. Here, he believes, is the key to understanding the bloody history of North America. He writes: "The Book of Genesis is a story of sin, banishment and loss: it tells us that we are the Lords of Creation, made for a life of ease and harmony in the Garden of Eden, but that we forfeited Paradise through our own wickedness." This tragedy left Europeans "exiles in an alien wilderness which we must struggle to subdue" and bestowed on them "the concept of linear time: by intervening in our destiny at a specific, defined moment, God gives us a fixed point from which our history unravels away from Eden like a ball of string."

In contrast, Native American origin stories situate humans as "an integral part of a 'natural' order which embraces the whole of creation. Similarly, although there are numerous myths about wrongdoing and its consequences, there is almost no Native American equivalent to the Judeo-Christian idea of a kind of communal sin, an inherited curse which isolates us and opposes us to a hostile material world."

Time after time, Native Americans greeted Europeans with awe—and wariness—but also a recognition of these strangers as elements of the natural world, much like unfamiliar rivers or mountains. The indigenous peoples made sense of these encounters by incorporating the strangers into their stories, and they welcomed the newcomers to their world through elaborate rituals of reciprocal gift-giving.

But Western myths had no role for the Natives except as noble but alien savages or foils to European history. This, Wilson argues, led to "a tendency, conscious or unconscious, to abstract Indians from the reality that we inhabit, thereby removing their experience from the

arena of morality and history in which our relations with other people are normally considered." In other words, Europeans found in Native Americans precisely what they wanted to find, regardless of a reality that was far more intricate. Thus the very same tribe Sir Francis Drake described as "tractable, free and loving, without guile or treachery" was thought "shameless and excessive" by the Spaniard Pedro Font.

If European perceptions of Native Americans showed an ability to evolve, it was only in conjuring ever more creative justifications for theft and murder. Wilson explains that earlier ideas of the Natives' savagery—or cultural inferiority—were refuted when they displayed an ability to adopt European customs in agriculture, language and trade. Later, Social Darwinism provided a handier argument: racial or biological inferiority. The effects of this thinking are made clear in an editorial in the *San Francisco Bulletin* lamenting the indiscriminate killing of indigenous California tribes in the second half of the 19th century: "We have spoken of the authors of this butchery as men—white men. So they were. We can invent no logic that will separate them from our species. Would that it were possible to do

so. ... Civilized humanity will scarcely believe it possible for human beings to be degraded so far below savages."

The loss of innocent life pains the writer less than the brutal method by which the superior race perpetrated it. Such perverted moral reasoning had little power to curb the genocidal tendencies of white Americans, and so, true to the implicit directive of their own origin story, they subdued—or erased altogether—the Natives, conquered the continent and fulfilled "Manifest Destiny."

For those clear-eyed enough to attempt an understanding of the terrible human cost of this "triumph," Wilson's scrupulous book is as good a place as any to start. It reminds one of something Mari Sandoz told a friend while writing her beautiful, elegaic biography of Crazy Horse: "The story is tremendous, with all the cumulative inevitability of a Greek tragedy, and I feel small and mean and incomplete, although I've done my best to get at the truth. If only I can pin it down on paper." Wilson—through diligence, sympathy and an understated lyricism—has managed to do just that. ■

Philip Connors is a freelance writer in New York.

Beyond the Shock

By Pat Aufderheide

In case it's a mystery to you why *Trauma: Life in the ER* and *Nature's Wrath III* are hot new cable series, the show *Hell's Angels* broke ratings records on the History Channel, or the term "shockumentary" has become the jargon du jour, reality producer Steve Rosenbaum, CEO of Broadcast Network News, can explain it. "When an audience is flipping between 70 channels," he told *Variety*, "the channel that gets you to stop wins."

In a ruthlessly competitive media world, that's reality. It's not deep or complicated. It's gross and crass and clear: TV documentaries are about car crashes, heart surgery, tornadoes and drug busts—never health care, schools and conflict resolution.

So I was more than interested to take in the DoubleTake Documentary Film

Festival. Now in its second year, DoubleTake is dedicated to the idea that the kind of engaged, humanist portraiture pursued by Walker Evans and other artists of the Depression offers inspiration for today and a contribution to a better tomorrow. The festival, held in Durham, N.C., in April is still stumbling toward a style and a definition, but it provided an opportunity for people who believe that media matter—public and commercial TV programmers, filmmakers and community activists—to meet.

Rosenbaum was there, explaining how his production business works within the hardball game of television. Yes, he says, you do have to build in cliffhangers to keep the audience through the commercials. And yes, you have to deal with sensationalism. But he also believes the world is full of stories worth doing, and that the

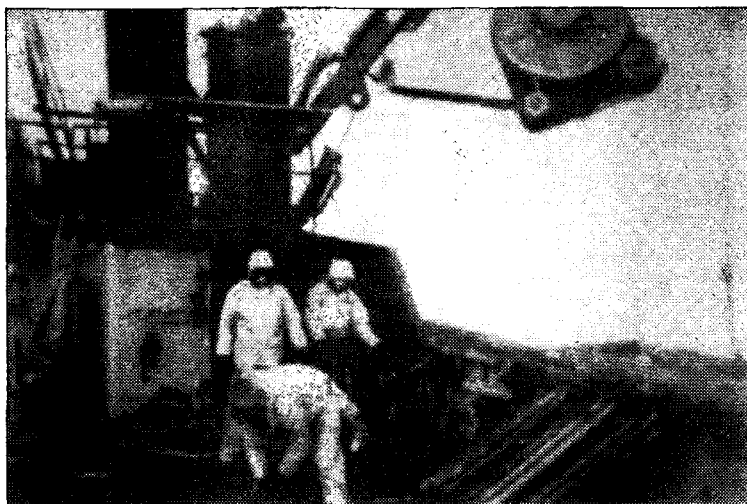
Internet will eventually democratize the media landscape. "The future is going to be less the voice of God and more all of our voices," he says. "The golden age of documentary hasn't happened yet."

For MTV's *Unfiltered* series, Rosenbaum's company produced an episode about an HIV-positive man who found a bride on the Internet. The man later told Rosenbaum that hundreds of people had contacted him, and he was grateful that the show had generated a virtual community for HIV-positive people. Lisa Heller, executive producer of *P.O.V.*, is also familiar with this networking phenomenon. Her pioneering series on PBS has evolved into a busy-bee construction site of virtual community building.

For commercial programmers like Kary Antholis, a vice president of HBO, what he calls "the three R's"—ratings, recognition and rewards—govern program decisions. Ratings matter most, but critical acclaim and plaques have their place. And it's the second two R's that drive HBO's renowned documentary choices. Their recent acquisition, Susan Koch's *City at Peace* was screened at the festival and airs on May 20. A moving and impressive chronicle, the film follows an after-school arts project in Washington for a year.

The unique project bridges class and racial gaps as teens from across the city audition to write and perform in their own musical. The kids are black and white, rich and poor. There's Cindy, a teen prostitute who shows up in an obscenity-laden T-shirt; and Laura, a child of divorce who goes to school with Chelsea Clinton. There's DeAngelo, already convicted of two armed robberies, and Rickey, a musician's son. Pam's parents are appalled she has black friends and are sent into a tailspin when her brother announces he has HIV. When DeAngelo gets shot on the street, the entire troupe visits him. The kids fall in love, go to jail, have sleepovers, hurt each other's feelings and get the giggles. They tumble into awareness of other worlds—and perhaps for the first time—explore otherness, whether it's another skin color or the other side of the tracks.

It wasn't easy to get *City at Peace* on TV. "My track record didn't count on this one," says Koch, a veteran producer from Cabin John, Md. "It's tough to find space for social documentaries like this. It's not what broadcasters want. No one believed this was a movie until it was finished."



***Dutch Harbor: Where the Sea Breaks Its Back* toured European and U.S. clubs with the avant-garde band that provided its haunting soundtrack.**

Although Koch is delighted that HBO picked up her film, she's even more thrilled when kids use the film to launch discussions about their own lives. At the festival, she was surrounded by teachers and social workers who wanted to put the film to work in their own communities.

What if your audience thinks documentaries are the "green vegetables" of programming? That's the problem that Rosemary Sykes of Lifetime says she faces. Lifetime picks its green veggies very carefully—each year it features one social issue, showcasing it with specials and activities.

This year's focus is childcare. The documentary series was launched on April 20 with the network premiere of Lee Grant's solid and troubling *Confronting the Crisis: Childcare in America*. The program reveals the daily, waking nightmare of parents everywhere. Jeff, a widower with a 6-year-old, has switched to a low-paying job to mesh his schedule with his child's. Jennifer is on the edge of losing her job for absenteeism because her children caught chicken pox. Even a professional couple who can pay for good childcare struggle to find a qualified provider. The film

encourages viewers to think, talk and act. A viewers' guide on activism around childcare is available on Lifetime's Web site, www.lifetimetv.com, and the channel has been working with the White House and with nonprofit organizations on childcare initiatives.

Some documentary filmmakers

launched their distinctive films in unexpected ways. Braden King and Laura Moya's *Dutch Harbor: Where the Sea Breaks Its Back*, is a haunting meditation on a port town far on the Alaskan frontier, which eloquently portrays the cultural and environmental consequences of the fishing industry's rapacious harvesting practices. King and Moya sought a different kind of venue for

Dutch Harbor—the club scene. The idea formed out of the soundtrack, which was a project of The Boxhead Ensemble, a rotating group of some of the most creative musicians in Chicago's indie-rock scene. The film toured clubs and theaters in the United States and Europe with the Boxhead Ensemble performing the soundtrack live. "It was pretty weird to see a film shot at the edge of the world, scored by avant-garde artists, in a 17th century music hall in Dresden," King says. Viewers can get a copy of the film through Atavistic Records (P.O. Box 578266, Chicago, IL 60657), Amazon.com—or by hitting the clubs.

Whether the festival's films were about country music, civil rights, public housing or professional wrestling ("Nobody ever says, 'You're a great actor.' They just say 'You're a fake,'" mourns one grappler.) they were marked by compelling storytelling—the opposite of a shockumentary. Equally marked, though, is the poverty of spaces where those stories can be seen and heard, and the even greater lack of spaces where they could be talked about, shared and built upon—even within the festival. They were like conversations waiting to happen. ■

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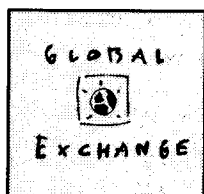
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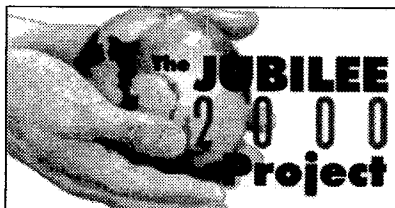


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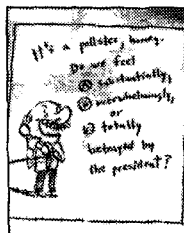
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oath" that all federal employees would have to sign if he is elected. Within 24 hours, 80 percent of federal employees call in sick.

Barr claims to have 1966 records from the Jungle Room Motel in Nashville that prove Tipper and Al Gore "did it" before they were married. The Gores' family doctor responds with evidence that the Gores never ever "did it," but bought their children from the Swedish catalogue *Kidesrichte*, like other respectable southerners.

In a related story, scientists at Microsoft-Aetna-Disney-Newsworld Corp. announced that they can now tell, simply from a urine sample, whether someone has had "inappropriate sexual relations" within the past 24 hours. Republican missionaries, as they are now known, vow that if re-elected, they will submit to the "pee and see" test daily.

MAY: The House managers unveil their new 24-hour pin-beeper program. All participating congressmen will have their whereabouts, video rentals, visits to drug stores and CD and book purchases electronically monitored and broadcast 24 hours a day on MSNBC.

JUNE: With pundits calling for him to top the pin-beeper program, Bush announces that while "I don't mean to sound sexist, it's time to restrict the White House internship program to men only." When Barney Frank, between peals of laughter, says that would be just fine with him, and that such a proposal could prompt him to run for president in 2004, Quayle attacks Bush for promoting "the Greek way of sex."

Michael Dukakis and Jimmy the Greek, co-chairs of the Greek Anti-Defamation League, demand an apology

for "smearing Greek sexuality." The RNC says it regrets any misunderstanding, and says that what Quayle meant to say is that he understands Greek men prefer sheep to each other.

The American Lamb Producers Association withdraws all funding from the Republican Party.

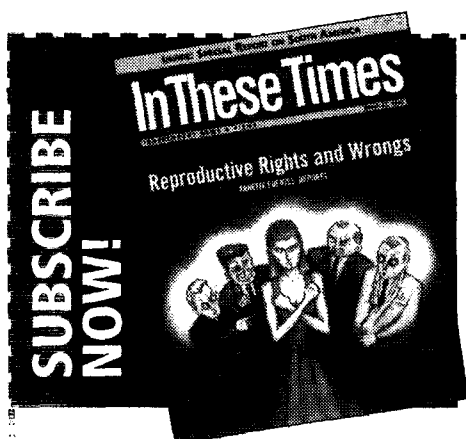
JULY: Matt Drudge announces that he has obtained copies of Janet Reno's latest mammograms, which he will post on the Internet. In retaliation, *Salon* claims to have video footage of the latest colonoscopy performed on Trent Lott, which proves, according to an anonymous source, that "things are very, very tight in there."

AUGUST: Larry Flynt announces that his \$100,000 finder's fee for the prostate exams of prominent Republicans has produced medical reports that reveal that "some things are much teenier than you'd guess, and the malignancy rate is way huger than you'd think."

OCTOBER: In the biggest scandal of the election, Ken Starr is caught in a Florida men's room with a Tinky Winky doll.

NOVEMBER: California, New York, Massachusetts and Wisconsin pass a referendum to repeal the 22nd Amendment. With 18 percent of the electorate turning out to vote, Bill Clinton is re-elected by a landslide. ■

Susan J. Douglas teaches communication studies at the University of Michigan. Her book, *Listening In: Radio and the American Immigration*, was just published by Times Books.



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G.O.P. Split as Many Cling To the Impeachment Issue

By RICHARD L. BERKE

WASHINGTON, Feb. 17 -- As many Republicans struggle to move beyond impeachment, they find their party fractured by a hard reality: many of them, particularly those doing the

Starr Struck

Susan J. Douglas looks into the future

JUNE 1999: Having failed to oust the president, the House managers announce, from the steps of the administration building at Oral Roberts University, their campaign slogan for the upcoming elections: Sexual Jihad 2000. Bob Barr displays red and blue T-shirts and baseball caps bearing the slogan.

AUGUST: The Republican National Committee files suit against the Hooters restaurant chain, whose waitresses have taken to wearing the Sexual Jihad T-shirts with "as if!" added in black marker.

FEBRUARY 2000: George W. Bush, having just won the Republican primary in New Hampshire, promises that, if elected, he will immediately install pheromone-sniffing pit bulls at all entrances to the White House. He also vows to install video surveillance cameras in all the hallways, studies, anterooms, bathrooms, closets and garbage disposals adjacent to the Oval Office.

In the wake of Bush's victory, Dan Quayle calls him "a party boy," and circulates photos of the governor throwing up in a frat house in 1963. Bush responds that Quayle is a "Midwest pussy," and circulates photos of him ironing his chinos in 1963. Lamar Alexander says, "Hey, what about me?"

MARCH: Having just won the Georgia and South Carolina primaries by a landslide on his "Peekaboo, I See You"

campaign, Quayle promises that, if elected, he will create a new executive-level position, the Office of Sexual Prosecutor. Ken Starr, currently acting associate dean of Our Lady of the Javelina College of Jesus the Immaculate Savior, is rumored to be a top candidate for the post.

Buoyed by Quayle's strong showing, 52 Republicans from the House and Senate stand on the steps of the Capitol to reaffirm their disgust with "what Clinton and the Democrats exposed our children to." They unveil their new "Mission to America," which asserts, among other things, that the missionary position is the only correct way for married couples who truly support family values to have sex in America. The "Mission," to be distributed to schools throughout the country via *The Weekly Reader*, is accompanied by carefully numbered step-by-step drawings modeled after the game "Twister," which illustrate the proper way for boys and girls to assume the position once they grow up and have a marriage license.

APRIL: Rocked by plummeting ratings after MSNBC introduces its "Barechested News" with John Gibson, Chris Matthews and Brian Williams anchoring in Chippendale outfits, CBS executives insist on fitting Dan Rather with a codpiece and moving him out from behind the desk so he can deliver the news while erect.

Steve Forbes unveils his proposal for the "sexuality loyalty
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